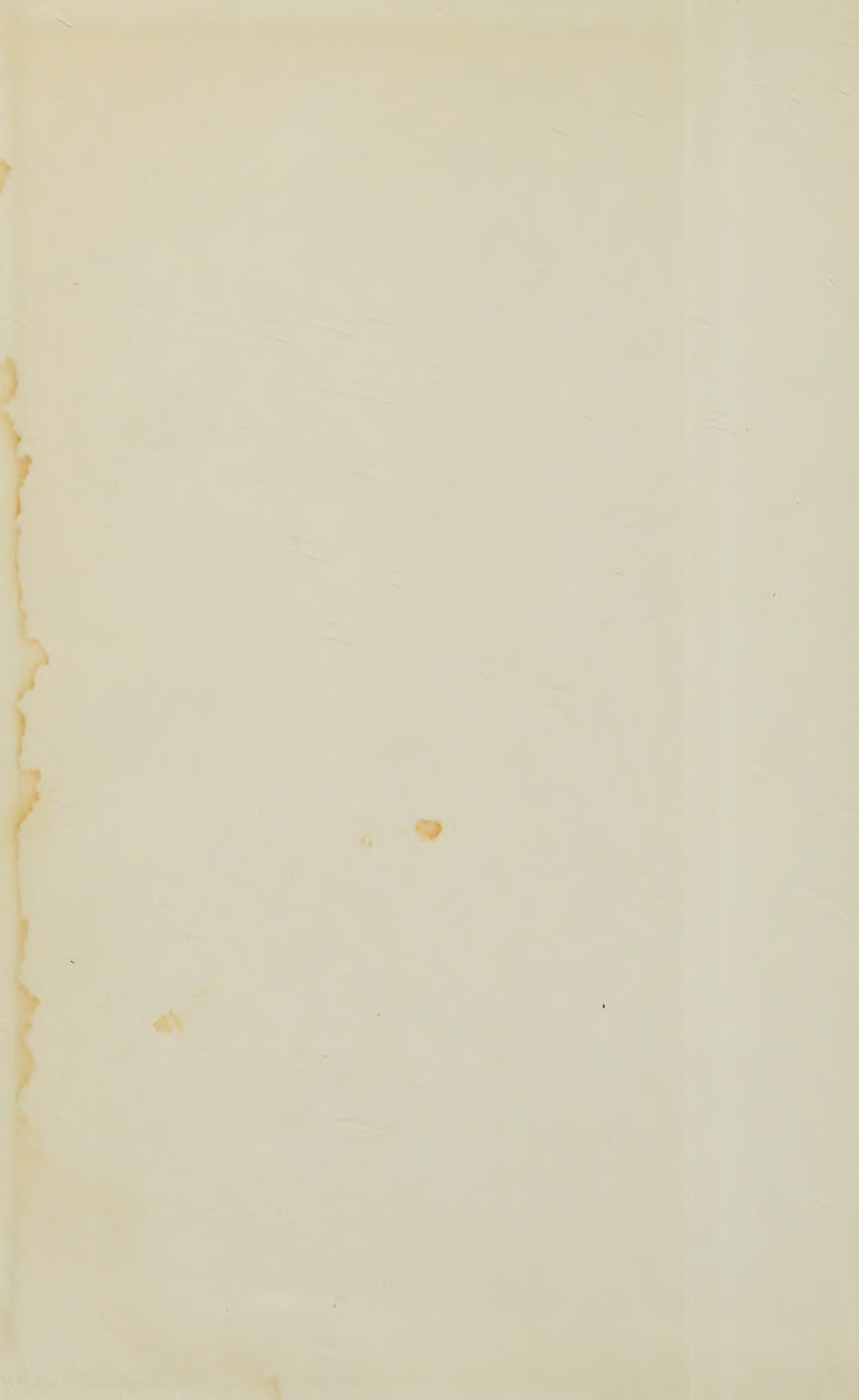



HOUSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY



R01168 48945



Houston, Texas



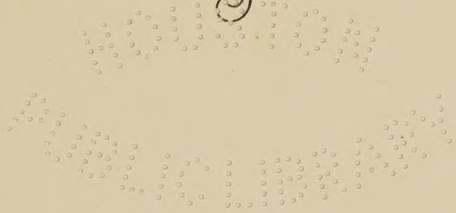
Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025

The Life of THOMAS E. WATSON

By
WILLIAM W. BREWTON

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

B
W33 v



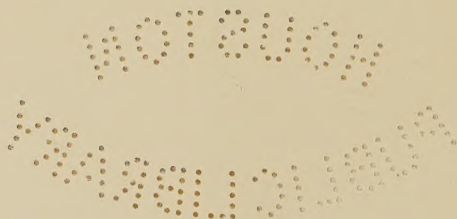
ATLANTA
PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHOR

1926

115968

R01168 48945

COPYRIGHT, 1926, BY
WILLIAM W. BREWTON



THE VAIL-BALLOU PRESS
BINGHAMTON AND NEW YORK

To My Sweetheart and Wife
FRANCES MARIAN BRADLEY BREWTON

PREFACE

This narrative, throughout which fact is scrupulously adhered to, marks the achievement by the author of a fond ambition of more than a decade. It was on the night of October 1, 1913, that a youth of 21, just out of college and a law student, invaded the carefully guarded precincts of Hickory Hill and revealed to the Sage his purpose "to keep the record straight" when the Sage should be here no more to do so for himself. The revelation brought from Georgia's most versatile son an expression of such generous gratitude that the young man went away with his heart pounding with new emotion, his mind thrilled with new inspiration. Yes, he would write a life of Tom Watson—in all its success and defeat, all its storm and color.

With the years went a correspondence to the very purpose and end the two had planned that night at Hickory Hill. And when the Sage was no more in life, all his private papers—rich beyond measure—were put at the exclusive use of the man who had dreamed.

The promise is now made good. The true account of the public life, and not a little of the inner, of a strange and most ingenuous figure, whose influence has yet to reach its largest scope, follows here for the first time.

WILLIAM W. BREWTON.

*Atlanta, Georgia,
U. S. A.
November 2, 1925.*

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
XXX PROGRESS BARRED	261
XXXI THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN OF 1896	266
XXXII THE VICTORY OF PRINCIPLE	274
XXXIII THE LESSON OF HISTORY	281
XXXIV CHOICE OF THE PEOPLE'S PARTY	289
XXXV THE CALL OF JOURNALISM	296
XXXVI A TEST OF PERSONAL POWER	304
XXXVII CHECK UPON THE GOVERNOR'S CHAIR	313
XXXVIII GOING THE LIMIT	319
XXXIX RÔLE OF REFORMER	325
XL IN BEHALF OF THE STATE	338
XLI THE SAGE OF HICKORY HILL	346
XLII SHADOWS	364
XLIII I CALL HIM GREAT	369
XLIV DECREE OF DESTINY	376
XLV SENATOR	387
INDEX	403

ILLUSTRATIONS

Thos. E. Watson, a Senator of the United States	<i>Frontispiece</i>
	FACING PAGE
Page of the Original Manuscript of Thos. E. Watson's <i>Napoleon</i>	288
Page of the Original Manuscript of Thos. E. Watson's <i>Jef-</i> <i>erson</i>	292
The Sage of Hickory Hill in 1913	354
Hickory Hill	362

NOTICE
Please do not write in this
book or turn down the pages

PROLOGUE

THE EMPIRE OF SPIRIT

HE who seeks the epitome of a man faces a problem of analysis. For this epitome lies, not in the summary of his achievements, but in the mainspring of his convictions. The coördinate forces which end in what we call a man's work do not reveal the essence of the man's nature. This essence lies beneath the contingencies of his career. His career is summed up in results, whereas the controlling power of his life eludes a general survey.

We come to understand the manner of a man when we examine the facts of his life, penetrate beneath these to find purpose, and then below even that to find the power which drove the man. It is not bound up in his attainments and is deeper than purpose because it is the force that does not change—it is his mainspring.

Nor is this conclusion defeated by the fact of a man's swerving from a particular course, or his oscillating between purposes. For such changes are but evidences of the ever enlarging scope of his life. They are in no wise referable to the dominant power of the man—the man in his simplicity. They belong to the realm of reaction to the forces of the world. They are but efforts to impart to world conditions the man's inner self—efforts renewed with each partial success or changed with every recoil in defeat.

The task of touching the mainspring of a man's life is increased a thousand fold if our analysis must be mainly of

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

“stuff that dreams are made of.” For while the essence of the nature of any man is beneath his contact with the world, it is, with most men, a thing lying close to the surface of this contact. It is seldom that we find a man in the background of whose mind is an ever present realm not of this world—a man whom nature has veritably made two men, even for the world around him. How shall the analyst penetrate this complex, and how shall he know the true man—the man in his simplicity—when he finds him? Which is more the man? Which is the man that does not change?

It is indeed the analysis of a strange complex that we undertake in seeking to reveal the real Thomas E. Watson. The manifold forces bound up in this man's nature both attract and repel; but they repel only in the great difficulty attending their resolution—they are hard to understand. The attraction lies in their very complexity. The quest is one of mystery and adventure.

From out the first realization of the facts of the Watsonian life the analyst cries: What power sent this man into the world and what force was his real control here? Wherein lay his true destiny, and did he achieve it? For, the first examination into his life reveals many strange things boding good and evil.

There are facts to support the cursory verdict of evil genius; and there are untold deeds warranting the stamp of benefactor of mankind. Which shall stand—or shall both? Was the good and the bad inexorably bound up in this man's life? The cursory survey says yes. Will a more careful one say no? Was Tom Watson, in the last analysis of his being, a man good and evil; or either alone?

THE EMPIRE OF SPIRIT

A verdict supporting any of these three findings is obtainable from the world at large. There are the surviving members of the Old Guard, not all of them Old Pops, who will stand for no other verdict than that of pure righteousness. It is the easiest matter in the world to round up the Tom Watson haters, some of whom, even now, would love to know that his soul did not rest in peace. And there are those chronic neutrals who take the middle ground on every question. To them Watson was a man of good and evil parts—good when he espoused their private causes, and evil when he opposed a pet theory or scheme of their own.

But must we accept any one of these verdicts? To answer that question is the herculean task of the analyst. Huge task if it be sought to show any one of them correct; and huger task still if, as we progress, we confront the seeming anomaly that none is. In the latter event we enter a realm of still greater complexity in seeking the answer to the question of what manner of man Thomas E. Watson was.

That he was not an ordinary man all men agree. That he was richly gifted in intellect, possessing more points of excellence than any other man his State has produced is an opinion widely held. That in some attributes history does not offer many his equal is an opinion the diligent student is not unwarranted in entertaining, as the sequel of the present narrative will develop. But these are questions the biographer may well leave to disputants. In providing an array of facts, properly so-called, the biographer should employ argument only in maintaining those essentials to the narrative which his readers would otherwise refuse to digest.

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

Thomas E. Watson offers the best opportunity for a commentary upon a definitive character existing today, in the view of the present writer. For studious comparison appears quite convincingly to have established that for complexity, mystery, individuality, positiveness and force, we are without his counterpart. If there are others who embody these traits in higher degree, it would be difficult to call them to mind. Distance lends no force to the argument in favor of a more conservative estimate, because we are, in the main, impressed with only one—or not more than two—characteristics of any other American or European leader of today.

But here is a study in conflict and calm; in passion and intellect; in the will to destroy and the will to save; in the most abandoned self-serving and the most unremitting self-sacrifice. Yet our analysis triumphs over these and all other contrasts in finding the mainspring of the true Watson. And it is found in that one trait indispensable to greatness—indispensable because no man who possessed it in higher degree than others of his generation ever failed of the recognition of history and none who lacked it was ever called fit for the regard of posterity. There is not a man living today who would dare deny to Thomas E. Watson the most positive, absolute and daring *courage* known to his generation; and if he outshone his fellow man in that, he might have possessed a thousand fatal faults and no power of earth could prevent his name echoing down the corridors of time. If history teaches one lesson above any other, it is that the coward is, of all creatures, the most detested; the man of courage, of all men, the last forgotten.

Then if Thomas E. Watson feared nothing, here or

THE EMPIRE OF SPIRIT

hereafter, we are to look beneath the practical affairs of his life to find the reason. If his uppermost trait was fearlessness, it must have been no lamp of experience that guided his feet. If he feared no force and regarded no consequence, it must have been because there burned within him a fire which was not of the material world.

And abundant, indeed, are the proofs of this deduction. No power, individual, political or religious, was above his attack. No man, beast, bird or flower was below his regard. If his motives could not be understood at times, it was because they had their seat in a nature in its essence too far removed from the sphere of most men's lives. All men received his regard; and all violations of his idealism, out of his courage, received his rebuke. There burned within him a never dying flame—consuming, at times, all in his presence. This fire was at all times paramount. Even when in the rôle of the man of the practical world, the real Watson—the unchanging force—was in the background. He had but to turn his gaze upon you and that unquenchable fire shone forth.

Wherein lay the seat of his power, the citadel of his sovereignty over the thousands who never for one moment in all his strange career left him? Could a man whose inner self drew its inspiration from the material world enchain the love of others? If he won that love, could he make it a worship? It is not within the realm of reason how a material nature can exercise command over the immaterial selves of others, and nothing short of command was the extent of the power exercised by Thomas E. Watson. He commanded the affections of others;—he did not merely have them bestowed upon him.

Then the sway of the true Watson was deathless; and if

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

deathless it was not over a material realm. Many were the powers and influences he exercised; but the real power, the power that never failed, that was never broken, was over the immaterial man. The essence of his genius was the purely spiritual. His domain was the Empire of Spirit.

CHAPTER I

GREAT MOTHER: GREAT SON

"YESSIR; dat whut he wuz. He wuz beyant 'em all."

Thus Aunt Mandy Bugg summarized her reminiscences. Looking back over her seventy-five years, Aunt Mandy visualized a little boy who was unlike the others. To her he was just different. She didn't know why he cared less for play than for study, unless it was because nature made him on a distinct last. And she had watched him through all the later years—and he had always been different.

"And dere wuz times when nobody could do nothing wid him but me, neither," she went on. "When he come home from school, he used to set down on de side of a ditch and git out his books, and he'd stay right dare 'till I went and got him. He wore dat seat slick as glass. His ma say 'Son, how come you don't come on to your supper,' and he'd stay dare right on 'till I go and git him. His pa would tell him he wuz 'fraid de teacher gwine git him fur not knowing his lesson; but I tell 'im dat want it—dat he wuz goin' on way ahead, gittin' de lesson de teacher hadn't come to. He pay no 'tention, but jes set dare and study dat book, till I go and git him. Yessir, jes like I tell yer—he wuz beyant 'em all."

Even before Amanda was married to Virgil Bugg, in slave days, she had been "in the family." According to

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

the best judgment of those who have known her all her life, she was about 10 years old when Tom was born. Amanda Watson she was then because she was owned by the Watson family.

Sitting on the "back stoop" of her shanty in Thomson, given her by the man she declares "never let her want fur nothing," Aunt Mandy discoursed with clearest recollection of his boyhood days. Today she sits there much of the time to brood over her remembrance of the boy and the man she knew all his life and whose dust now lies within a hundred yards of her shack.

"Dare wuz something strange 'bout him," she said. "He never wuz like de other chillun. When I ax him how come he don't run 'long and play wid 'em, he say dey make too much fuss. He don't like de noise. He want to be quiet so he kin think. He always is studdin 'bout something. And he sleep wid his books under his haid. Long time after he grow up I ax him how come he use to sleep wid his books under his haid. He say dat dere wuz a 'ticular reason fur dat, but he never say whut 'twuz. I ain't never heard him say whut 'twuz."

Then Aunt Mandy would talk of the later years. Her mind seemed to be unusually quick and clear where Tom was concerned. She said he left her money when he went to the final high seat to which his State called him, and that he told her there was plenty more where that came from. She said he made much money, but that he had never allowed want to visit her.

"After I got all swole up wid rheumatism he tole me to come over dare to Hickory Hill and git whutever I needed," Aunt Mandy said.

The old darky seemed impressed most thoroughly with

GREAT MOTHER: GREAT SON

the fact that, as she said, "dey all had to git me to go to him when dey couldn't do nothing wid him."

"One day he spoke at de plant till he wuz wringing wet wid sweat," she said, speaking of an open air speech Tom made at his publishing house some fifteen years ago. "When de crowd all shook hands wid him and broke up, he went on in de house and set down widout changing his clothes. Mrs. Watson and de rest of 'em tried to git him to take off his wet clothes before he took cold, but he wouldn't do it. Dey sent fur me. I went in and saw him settin' dare studdin. I says 'Son, ain't you gwine take dem old wet clothes off and git on some dry ones before you takes cold?' and he says he's all right like he is. I jes stays dare, easy like, and don't rub de hair de wrong way. After a while I says 'Son, your old Mammy skeered you gwine git sick. Den who gwine take kere your old Mammy?' Den he looks at me and a smile breaks out on his face and he gits up and goes in his room and gits on some dry clothes."

It was another time, though, several years later, that Aunt Mandy's strange powers of persuasion seemed possessed of most efficacy. Tom, who was "subject of de asthma," had been in bed three weeks; and notwithstanding the fact his physician had said all along that there was nothing making it necessary for him to remain in bed, he had refused to arise. Although the doctor had gone further and urged him to get up, saying he was in fact doing himself grave injury by lying in bed, Tom had refused to budge.

"Dey kain't git him out of de bed, so dey sends fur me," said Aunt Mandy. "I goes in and I says 'Son, whut you lyin' in de bed fur?' and he says he's sick. I says 'Why

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

you didn't let me know you wuz sick,' and he says he hated to worry me. I says 'Son, you know your old Mammy want to know when you sick. How long you been lying here in de bed?' He says he been dare three weeks.

"Dey done told me he want sick show nuff bad and dat he ought to git up. So I says 'Son, can't you git up?' He say he can't. So I goes to de side of de bed and axes him to jes tech one foot down on de floor. He squirms 'round and gits dat foot down. Den I tells him to rest a little. Den I tells him to put de other foot down on de floor. Atter a while, he gits dat one down, and is a settin' on de side of de bed. Den I puts my arm 'round him and says I believes he kin stand up. And me and him raises up from de side of de bed at de same time. I has already got his stick and I puts it in his hand, and starts walking wid him. He gits started and he don't want to stop; and tereckly he gits to laughing and to feeling good, and he walks out of de room and den out in de yard, and from dat on he stays up."

The recollections of Aunt Mandy throw a vivid light upon the generally known facts about the man she knew from a baby, and who, to her, was "beyant 'em all." She knew much, for an old darky, and she had watched and studied Tom from the cradle to the grave. Still living in the house he gave her, to her it is like telling of a greatness of her own to recount her innumerable reminiscences.

And the present writer will try to make his story just as faithful to fact, and just as colorful in incident as are Aunt Mandy's recollections. Only his task is much greater, as he shall have to deal with the many varied and weighty developments in which she was in no wise con-

GREAT MOTHER: GREAT SON

cerned. She still believes she is justified in saying "he wuz beyant 'em all." Let the record show.

Edward Thomas Watson was born September 5, 1856, in a hewn log hut three miles north of Thomson, Georgia, on the old Augusta or Appling, now called Cobbham, road. The place was then in Columbia County, but in 1870 it became a part of the territory going to make up McDuffie County, which was carved out of Columbia and Warren Counties. Today the hut is overshadowed by a large frame house adjoining it and completely obstructing a view of it from the road. Used now by tenants, the hut has but three rooms. It is believed that it originally had more, and it is known that an old "L" piazza fronted it which was later torn away to make room for the big frame house in front of it.

To this humble dwelling John Smith Watson, the father of the subject of this narrative, brought Ann Eliza Maddox, his bride, from their marriage in Augusta, Georgia. It was then the home of Thomas M. Watson and his second wife. Thomas M. Watson and Catherine Watson, his first wife, the parents of John Smith Watson, are buried beneath a small clump of china-trees near the old house, and over the graves monuments to both stand today, erected, they show, as the "tribute of T.E.W. and J.F. W.," respectively the subject of our story and his brother. Catherine Watson was the Widow Jones when she married Thomas M. Watson. Her maiden name was Catherine Smith, whence the middle name of John Smith Watson. Besides John Smith Watson, she was also the mother of Tom Peter Watson, Catherine, and William

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

Watson, the last named later becoming "Uncle Ralph," the hero of *Bethany*, the only novel by the subject of this biography.

It was at the old White Oak Camp Ground, seven miles from Thomson, that John Watson first saw Ann Eliza Maddox. He fell desperately in love with her and requested an introduction. The young lady, noted for her beauty and mental gifts, from the first reciprocated the youth's ardor, and it was generally known from that day the match was made.

It was not known even to one of the surviving members of his father's family, until data too authentic to be questioned was laid before him by the present writer, that the true name of the man whose life we are now tracing was Edward Thomas Watson, instead of Thomas Edward Watson.

But in the earliest diary kept by him, and now lying before the author, his name is repeatedly inscribed "E. Thomas Watson," and not until his college days did he begin the now famous subscription.

Just why Thomas E. Watson changed the order of his Christian name forms one of the romantic incidents of his boyhood, which will be told in its proper place.

Tom was the second child of John Smith Watson and Ann Eliza Maddox Watson. Their oldest child was Addie, who became Mrs. John Gardner, and died in Wiliston, S. C. His other brothers and sisters, in the order of birth, were: William A. Watson, now living in Thomson; Julian C. Watson, deceased; Mary Isabella Watson, later Mrs. George W. Usry, wife of the Sheriff of Glascock County, who resided at Gibson, Georgia, deceased;

GREAT MOTHER: GREAT SON

J. F. Watson, who died in Thomson; and Julia Watson, now Mrs. Julia Cliatt of Thomson.

The record thus shows that only two members of the family still live—William A. Watson and Mrs. Julia Cliatt. Only one sister and one brother were born in the house in which Tom was born. They were Addie and J. F., well known as Forrest.

In the meagre references he has left of his ancestors, Thomas E. Watson has recorded that they were Quakers, both the Watsons and the Maddoxes. He says they came to Georgia about 1750 from North Carolina, acquiring extensive lands between the Savannah and Ogeechee Rivers. His account declares that they divided this land among themselves, and started the town, Wrightsboro, generally believed today to be the oldest settlement in Georgia except St. Marys and Savannah. They were of the gentry, landowners and slaveholders, and cultivated tobacco, his account says, and were identified with the political and military movements of the day.

The Watson account goes on further to say that his grandfather was one of the bolters led by John Forsyth from the convention held in 1833 to decide the question of nullification, when the convention voted to adopt South Carolina's position. This showed, he says, that his grandfather was an Andrew Jackson man.

The account says, too, that Tom Watson's father and uncles served in the Confederate Army. One uncle was killed in it, another made a lifelong invalid, and his father was twice wounded. He recounts his remembrance of going with his mother to find his father and bring him home. Where they went is not recorded.

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

The following excerpt from a letter written in November, 1918 by the subject of this biography to Mrs. John C. Coleman, of Swainsboro, Ga., whose mother was named Watson, in response to her request that he write a history of the Watson family to which they belonged, is his only known comment upon his ancestry, further than what is given above:

“The Watsons who are mentioned in White’s Historical Collections, and also in the late Geo. Smith’s History of Georgia, were my ancestors. I own a considerable part of the original Quaker colony grant of forty thousand acres—in fact my residence is situated on part of it. My title to the Obediah Cloud place reaches back to the Crown Grant signed by the Royal Council, and countersigned by Chas. Watson, Secretary. It has the original King George III seal, as large as the saucer of a tea-cup and several times as thick, the old Royal Seal imprinted on wax.

“The names John and Thomas have persisted in our family ever since it came from England—from near the Scotch border—migrated from Pennsylvania to Virginia, sent off-shoots into the Carolinas, then across the river into Georgia, and so on to Alabama, Mississippi and Texas.

“I presume you know the head of the house was the Marquis of Rockingham, and that Rockingham Castle, in England, was the ancestral family seat. In my library I have a copy of ‘Rockingham Castle and the Watsons,’ published in London in 1891. In it the pedigree of the Watsons shows the same fondness for the names John and Thomas, but especially Thomas. In fact there seems to have been a Thomas Watson in every generation.

“Our family, in its English home, was connected with the Montagues, the Digbys, the Manners, and others.

GREAT MOTHER: GREAT SON

Another name that constantly occurs in the pedigree is Edward—and that is my middle name.

“Originally our folks were staunch Royalists, and one of the last of the Roman Catholic Bishops in the reign of the Tudors was Thomas Watson. You will remember that Captain John Watson was an officer serving under General Tarleton, in the Carolinas during the Revolutionary War.

“On the other hand, a Major Watson fought on the other side, was mortally wounded at the Battle of Kettle Creek, in Wilkes County, and was buried near the battlefield, where a large marble slab identifies his grave. So far as I know, he has never been mentioned by the Georgia Historical Society in any of its records.

“You will also recall that one of our family was the hero of the Battle of Monterey, during the Mexican War of 1848; his name is mentioned in Randall’s ‘Maryland, My Maryland.’ ”

The enduring force that made Tom Watson great was the sacred love he bore his mother and the angelic character and beauty of spirit he saw in her. He loved her with all the ardor and pure devotion of one who drew his very life and hope thereof from her. No man more willingly said he owed his mother everything than he. She understood and encouraged when others did not or could not. When little Tom wanted to dream and build air castles of the future, it was his mother who spoke soft, tender words of encouragement. She understood him so well, and nurtured his ambition to be great so tenderly that his adoration of her became a veritable consuming flame within his breast. He believed she was sacred. He knew in her was his hope.

Tom’s father, like many other men of his day, believed

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

more in farm work than in study, but he was never able to get Tom to agree with him. There were sharp clashes between them when the boy neglected the hoe or the rake, as he did later the plow, for a book. And then it was his mother who shielded him from the wrath of a hard and misunderstanding father. She knew the little fellow's ambition; she knew he wanted to read books and think about what great lords and ladies of other days had done.

And it wasn't hard for the mother to understand. Mrs. Watson was a learned woman. Especially was she deeply versed in history and biography. According to her youngest child, Mrs. Julia Cliatt, she could talk for hours on the history of many nations, and was figuratively a walking library of French history. She could hold the attention of listeners for hours in discoursing about Josephine, or Marie Antoinette or many another great woman of historical literature, Mrs. Cliatt said in revealing that it was from his mother that Tom got his marvelous acumen in the same sphere.

But Tom himself has told about it; and so beautifully, so touchingly, that this phase of his story would be without finish did we not record it again. When he had passed the half century of life he wrote:

"My mother loved me so tenderly that she had an ambrotype taken, with my chubby form on her bosom. She was not pleased with the artist's representation of herself; and she broke that part of the glass, to my eternal regret. As I now have it, there is nothing left but the baby, lying there on its mother's bosom, looking innocently at the artist—a happy smile on its lips. . . .

"In these latter days, during which I have been working at such a high pressure, and doing so many things, the som-

GREAT MOTHER: GREAT SON

nambulism and nightmare that haunted my childhood have returned to afflict me; and they brought with them the memory of how my mother used to croon me to sleep, singing softly, evenly, and stroking my hair with tender hand. It is from her that I got the passionate sympathy for oppressed humanity; from her, my driving power; from her, my capacity for work; from her, my love of the higher life, and the determination to be as helpful to others as I can. . . .

“As we journey on toward the evening of life, our childhood days seem to come out from the Forgotten Land, to meet us; and the voice that we catch amid those early recollections is that of our mother. We recall her words of admonition; how she told us what was right, and what was wrong; how she pleaded with us to be good; how she heard our prayers at night; how she tucked the cover about us, in the trundle-bed; how she would come and soothe us back to sleep when we cried out in terror in some bad dream.”

CHAPTER II

THE YEARNING FOR KNOWLEDGE

WHEN Tom was about two years old, his father moved some six miles to a farm he bought from one Langston on what is now the Thomson-Augusta road. It was here that his earliest recollections were formed—of home life, of Aunt Mandy, of the work on the farm—and it was from this typically country, one-story frame house, shaped like an “L,” that he first went to school. The place is practically the same distance from Thomson, in a different direction, as the birthplace. John Watson was seeking to make a home for his wife, and two children, and believed the best way was to buy his own land and have a place where he was boss. Tom was less than two and a half years old when his brother, William, familiarly known today as “Top” Watson, was born. The third child of John and Ann Eliza Watson was called Top from boyhood because, it is said, his mother called him “Sugar Top” when he was a baby.

“Top” Watson is authority for the statement that Tom’s first teacher was Miss Jennie Speer who taught an old field school not far from the Watson home. Forth to her cabin school house went Tom with his sister, Addie, when he was about eight years of age.

But not long was Tom to remain there, for upon the death of his grandfather, Thomas M. Watson, on June 4, 1865, John Watson moved back to the old place where

THE YEARNING FOR KNOWLEDGE

Tom was born, having inherited it jointly with his sister, Catherine. John Watson became sole owner of his father's place, however, by trading to Catherine, for her interest therein, his place.

Thus Tom was about nine years old when he moved back to his birthplace, and he had gone to school probably less than a year. He next went to school to Miss Fanny Dooley and John R. Wilson, about two miles from home, and his brother, "Top," recalls that his next teacher was Miss Lizzie Richards, who taught about a quarter of a mile from what is now the center of Thomson.

For several years Tom trudged back and forth with his few books and his tin dinner bucket. One day when he was about 12, his mother told him there was a "picture-taker" in town, and to stop at the place and get a tin type impression of himself on his way to school. The lad did so and the tin type played quite an important part in his life, being the inspiration of his prose poem, "Convalescent," published more than forty years later.

John Watson, realizing little the meaning of an education, offered his boys their choice between work in the field and going to school. When old enough to make a choice, "Top" decided in favor of the field, but Tom wanted to go to school and measure swords with the other young striplings in the beginnings of history and English grammar. He had already shown a pronounced predilection for books, for it was at his home on the other side of Thomson, where he first entered school, that he "wore de side of de ditch slick, a-settin' dare studdin his book," as Aunt Mandy put it.

Besides, his mother was lending him encouragement, for, according to Mrs. Cliatt, "she saw in Tom more than she

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

saw in the rest of us.” That the mother’s judgment did not go wrong was borne out by the later years when Tom’s main claim to distinction was his ability to write, while his brothers and sisters, howbeit they made for themselves names honorable and good, achieved not fame.

John Watson had moved back to his first home at a time when it was extremely hard to make a living. The Civil War had just ended, and there were no more slaves, and few negroes to be hired. The old place, upon which he had spent several thousand dollars by way of building the new frame structure that adjoins the original log hut, was not paying. In fact, labor was so scarce that the father of Tom had to get a smaller place. He sold for about \$7,000 a farm today one of the finest in Georgia, and bought a considerably smaller place about half a mile north of Thomson on the same road for about \$2,000. It was here, in a large frame house, then without the piazza it now has, that Tom lived when he went to school in Thomson to the two men he has made to live in his writings—Robert H. Pearce, living now at an advanced age in Atlanta, and Rev. Epenetus Alexis Steed, Principal of the Thomson High School. He was under Pearce before going to school to Steed. Associated with E. A. Steed was his brother, Thomas J. Steed, under whom also Tom had studies.

Other teachers are mentioned in his writings as having taught Tom in his early years, among them Mrs. Edith Ellington, Miss Jennie Embree and Miss Jennie Binion, but references to these are meagre. Tom’s music teacher, Miss Belle Hanson, living today at the advanced age of 90 years in Thomson, whom he probably loved more than any, will be spoken of further on.

THE YEARNING FOR KNOWLEDGE

Professor Pearce has been referred to in Watson works as "one of the noblest, sweetest spirits that God ever sent into the world."

E. A. Steed still lives as "Ruel Wade," the young preacher who was the rival of "Uncle Ralph," in *Bethany*.

Glancing through the boy's school books, the biographer notices numerous drawings of birds and plants, bearing out the words of his brother and sister that he developed a passion for the study of both in his early years. Many a time he fought a boy larger than himself, who, he knew, could whip him, for killing a bird. His love of nature was one of the big things of his life until its close.

These books also reveal that Tom had sweethearts—for many are the names he has inscribed on the fly leaves. But there was one of his early romances which deserves more than cursory mention.

As nearly as can be ascertained, Tom was 14 years old when he first saw Theodosia Ernest Story. Both were attending the Thomson school of the two Steeds. The girl was about two years his junior and was not as far advanced in her studies as Tom. The boy fell in love with her and she returned his affection. He would often carry her books and draw pictures for her. Enamored as much of the girl's name as of her, Tom frequently reminded Theodosia that the initials of their Christian names were the same, save that they were not in the same order.

"You know, I like your initials better than mine, because I think 'T. E.' sounds better than 'E. T.,'" he told her. "So I'm going to change my name from 'E. Thomas' to 'Thomas E.'"

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

Theodosia approved the happy identity of initials herself, and Tom informed his mother of his intention.

"My mother told Tom he could go ahead and change his name if he wanted to, and, in fact, agreed that 'Thomas Edward' carried more euphony than 'Edward Thomas,' " says Mrs. Cliatt, in recalling her mother's version of the incident told her years after it transpired.

However, it was several years after Tom's announcing his decision to Theodosia that he actually put it into effect. The fly leaf of his earliest scrap-book bears the inscription "E. Tho's. Watson, Oct. 1872." This was the month and year he entered college.

The romance of Tom and Theodosia continued for several years—in fact until after his entrance into the practice of law in Thomson; and it was not until just before his departure for the national capital in 1921 that he returned her last letter to him, discovered among some old and forgotten papers. He returned it with a note saying that, as it was for his eyes alone, he preferred for her to receive it back while he lived. They were good friends to the end; and Theodosia, today Mrs. John Hogan, of Thomson, was on the free mailing list of the Watson publications until free distributions were forbidden by law.

CHAPTER III

FIRE FROM FLINT

IT was Tom Watson, himself, who said that the thing which made a man great—which distinguished him—must be born in him; that he was incapable of creating that trait. His aphorism was spoken out of his own experience, for every single trait of Watson, the man, is readily discoverable in Watson, the boy. This is probably one reason why his most readily perceivable traits are so widely known. Speak of Tom Watson, and everybody who has ever heard of him conjures up the same image.

High nervous tension, quick temper, ambition, keen sympathy, alertness, boundless love of study, a self-willed nature brooking no external rule and running to the tyrannical, championship of the under-dog, fearlessness—these characteristics were just as pronounced in the boy as in the man.

Tom's teachers loved him for his bright mind, ambition and industry. He says he never had a teacher who did not love him. The boys recognized his superior mentality and respected his willingness to fight. Red-headed and freckled-faced, by no means the "prettiest" boy in school, he nevertheless won at least a respectable portion of the female admiration around school.

And how he could and would fight. In some of his memoirs he records that he never remembered whipping

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

✓ but one boy; but "he happened to be slow, and I got into his hair, and bumped his head against the wall of the depot, before he knew what was happening to him."

Top Watson relates that one day, going home from school—the approved and accepted time for fights in small towns—Tom and his cousin, a son of Tom Peter Watson, got into such an interminable scrimmage that Uncle Tom Peter had to loose the dogs on Tom to stop it. The brothers twain made tracks for home up the big road with dispatch when they heard the first baying of the hounds.

"Mr. Top" also relates that Tom wanted a thrashing given their overseer, once, for beating a negro who worked on his father's farm. He hated to see punishment inflicted upon anything that was helpless—man or beast. He invariably took up for the under-dog. Tom would have thrashed the overseer himself, if he had been physically able.

In a magnificent country home, more than a hundred years old, some fifteen miles from Thomson in Columbia County, lives Carlton Smith who knew Tom Watson from his earliest years. In fact Carlton's father was John E. Smith, familiarly known as "Doc" Smith, who bought the old home place where Tom was born from John Watson. Tom's grandmother, Catherine Watson, was the sister of Carlton's grandfather; and Carlton Smith recalls today the wedding feast, out under the trees at the old Watson place, when Tom's grandfather brought home his second wife, successor of Catherine Watson. Carlton was then quite a small boy, too small to reach the chicken and biscuits they had to hand him from the huge banquet board. It was Carlton Smith, too, who identified for the

FIRE FROM FLINT

present writer two obscure graves, in the clump of china-trees where Thomas M. Watson and Catherine Watson are buried, as those of Tom Watson's uncles—Tom Peter Watson and William Watson, "Uncle Ralph" of *Bethany*.

Carlton and Tom were in school under Robert H. Pearce and the two Steeds later. At that time Carlton was living at Tom's old birthplace. A cyclone, still remembered by old Columbia and McDuffie County residents, had torn away the ornate fluted columns with which John Watson had surrounded the piazza of the frame structure he built adjoining the log hut, not to mention the carrying away of one gable. Carlton's father put the place in about the style in which it now appears. The log cabin in which Tom was born was used by Carlton's mother as a pantry, a small passage way connecting it with the main house.

Tom was now living at the place a half mile from Thomson, formerly occupied by his Uncle Tom Peter and from which Tom and Top had been chased by the dogs. It was a frequent thing for Carlton to stop by, on the way home from school, to spend the night with Tom, and for Tom to go home with Carlton.

"A fight after school was a frequent thing, and many were staged at recess or during the dinner hour on the school grounds," Mr. Smith recalled. "Tom was in for all kinds of sport, and while recognized as the smartest boy in school, he was not always bending over a book. He was alive to everything going on on the school grounds, and, in fact, stirred up not a little of the doings.

"The thing more noticeable than anything else about Tom was that he was not afraid to tackle the bigger boys

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

—boys much larger than he was. And he was fast when he fought. One day a husky fellow, big enough to whip two like Tom, got into an argument with him during which he called Tom an opprobrious name. Tom 'lit into him' like a streak of lightning before he knew what was going on, and down they went. The fellow was much heavier than Tom and if he had gotten on top he would have beaten him up badly. So several of us got together and separated them—and it took a bunch of us to do it.

"We were playing marbles one day, when Tom and one of the boys got into a disagreement about somebody cheating. It was a question of only a few seconds before Tom was on him, good fashion, punching him about the head and face and jabbing him in the ribs, until the other boy had given in. Then Tom let him up."

Mr. Smith declared that Tom was just as quick to forgive as he was to get mad.

"Right after every fight he would be in a good humor again, and would forget it. I never knew him, in those days, to harbor a permanent hatred. In fact he would fight and then join the other boys in laughing about it."

But Tom had some faults which prevented his being as much liked by the pupils as he was by his teachers.

"He was overbearing and tried to force his will on the other boys," Mr. Smith said. "You got along with him all right as long as you gave in to him; but look out for a fight if you crossed him. And he would put up with no interference with his own plans."

The boys engaged in the old time game of socket ball, still in vogue among small town and country schools. In this game you had to hit the boy who was running. A

FIRE FROM FLINT

rubber ball, somewhat spongy, but by no means hollow, was used.

"Tom had the most telling throw of any boy I ever knew," Mr. Smith said. "One day I saw him draw back and hurl the ball into the side of a boy as though he fully intended to knock his lights out. We all saw the boy go down in a heap and flop over. Tom had hit him in the side, but the throw was enough to bowl over one of the huskiest boys in school. Tom threw to knock out every time, it looked like, but he was right there to help the boy up."

But Tom hated a bully more than anything else in the world, and had none of the bully in him, Mr. Smith clearly recalled. He was always ready to take up for any of the boys who were being imposed upon. Mr. Smith remembered that it riled Tom tremendously to see one of the big boys "pick on" a little fellow, and Tom was "always right on the job to sail into any big boy doing so."

The tyrannical streak in Tom at this early period is in no way better illustrated than in the incident related by B. P. O'Neal, widely known Macon capitalist, who was reared in Thomson and went to school with Tom Watson.

"I remember one cold day sitting by the stove in the school room," said Mr. O'Neal. "I had my feet poked out to the stove. Tom was fixing the fire, putting wood in the stove. He had the cap of the stove off, and was just reaching down for a stick of wood when he saw my feet up against the stove. I was studying my lesson and paying no attention to him. Suddenly there was a terrific blow across my shins and down went my feet. Jerking with pain, I looked around, only to find Tom still

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

plying the stove with wood. He never looked at me and he never said a word. He had brought down a big hickory log across my legs with merciless force, riled to see me comfortably warming while he was fixing the fire. At first I thought the roof had fallen in, and I never did know what could have been the matter with him. He wanted my feet down and he used his own method in attaining his desire."

The petulance of the boyish Watson is further illustrated in a hunting escapade related by Carlton Smith.

"Tom came out to our place to go hunting with me one day," said Mr. Smith. "I had two guns—a shot-gun and a rifle. I told Tom he could have his choice. He took the shot-gun, and we put out. Tom fired away at several things, missing them all. I was giving him the best chances and he already had the best gun. Directly, I spied a squirrel in a high tree top. I banged away with my rifle and brought him down. Seeing my better luck, Tom got mad. He said I ought to have let him had first shot at the squirrel.

"We went on through the woods, Tom missing several more shots, and directly came upon some geese belonging to a neighboring farmer. Impatient and fretted at his ill luck, Tom deliberately raised his piece and fired into the flock of geese, taking off one unlucky gander. It was a good thing the owner of the flock was nowhere around.

"Later in the hunt the game became very scarce and we had nothing to do but trudge along. Restless for something to do, and full of mischief besides, Tom went over to the jam of a rail fence where much trash had accumulated and set the fence on fire. I tried my best to get

FIRE FROM FLINT

him not to do it, as it was dangerous to crops and would entail prosecution, but he would not hear me. I had to set to with all my might to put the fire out, in which task he directly joined when the probable consequences of his act dawned upon him."

CHAPTER IV

LAYING UP TREASURE IN BOOKS

Not least among the things which make the writing of a Life of Thomas E. Watson an attractive labor is the wealth of material he left, so rich of his inner life as well as of his worldly career.

The two years immediately preceding his entering college in October 1872, as well as the early months thereafter, are reflected with intimacy in his earliest scrapbook. Even to the last years of his life he made random entries in his scrapbooks, and there is one for almost every stage of his career.

The interesting miscellany of the first scrapbook includes his early poetical effusions, accounts of fishing and hunting trips, historical notes, appearing in most instances as marginalia, and comic drawings clipped from the current literature.

The first entry in this scrapbook is on the question young debaters "bled and died" over in the early '70's—should there be freedom of the press? Notes upholding both sides were entered by Tom. First he put down three propositions in the negative. They are:

"1. If every dreamer of innovations may propagate his projects, there can be no settlement. 2. If every murmurer at government may diffuse discontent, there can be no peace. 3. If every sceptic in theology may teach his follies, there can be no religion."

LAYING UP TREASURE IN BOOKS

Though he afterwards fought valiantly for freedom of thought, speech and press, and exercised all three probably with greater latitude than any other Georgian, only one proposition appears in its favor in the boyhood scrapbook:

"If nothing may be published but what civil authority shall have previously approved, power must always be the standard of truth."

"Dr. Johnson," presumably Dr. Samuel Johnson, the lexicographer, is given credit for the propositions.

Even in Tom's boyhood days "the height to which dress has been carried" caused him to enter his protest. In an elaborate essay he reminds the young ladies of the dubious origin of the then prevalent bustle. He says:

"On the West Coast of Africa, the Negresses wear a hump on the lower extremity of the back on which they carry their babies. Therefore, ladies, begging your pardon, I think that this Bend (for it is most certainly a bend) should be called the African Bend; for here, ladies, you borrowed the idea. Yes, the daughters of wealth, the daughters of Kings, the daughters of the Sunny South have borrowed the idea of a hideous hump, which would disgrace a camel, from ignorant, savage Negresses."

It is deducible that the question was even one of public debate at the Thomson High School as the scrapbook contains still more material, much of it arranged as a speech. And the feeling the boy had on the subject never left him, for until his last years he continued to inveigh against styles that "robbed woman of the charm nature gave her." He hated the corset because it destroyed the Grecian type, which was the Watson ideal.

The verse, probably no more than doggerel in form,

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

breathes much of the poetical impulse. It is preceded by the comment, added later on: "All of these rhyming pieces I wrote while laboring under a severe attack of 'Durn fool.'" In the summer of 1871 (Tom was now 15) he penned, in commemoration evidently of his first "lost love," the lines, "To the Guadalquivir," his earliest poem of which he left record, which are as follows:

When thou reachest, gentle river,
Her whom I have lost forever,
Tell her how thou seest me now:—
Tell her of this furrowed brow;—
Tell her of this sunken eye,
Of youthful vigor too quick fled by.
Tell her how childhood's blasted hope
Has left me through this world to grope
Without a star to light my way,
Without a hope of breaking day.
Tell her of the vow she spoke
Tell her how that vow she broke.
Tell her how beneath the shade
Of the lone and darksome glade,
When the moon was shining bright
On that quiet summer night,
When the lonely Whip-po-will
Was singing from the distant hill,
While watching the starry heaven above
How I told her of my love.
Tell her how she bent her head
And how she promised me to wed;
But look at me and answer now
How she kept her solemn vow.
Now fare thee well, sweet Guadalquivir,

LAYING UP TREASURE IN BOOKS

Speed on thy message, gentle river.
Farewell my life's first, only love;
Farewell the bright hopes from above;
Farewell scenes of my early childhood;
Farewell shades of the darksome wildwood;
Farewell thoughts which now came fast,
Through the dark mazes of the past.
Yes, farewell all the memories twined
Of early childhood round my mind—
"Of early childhood," yes, the name
Sets my brain all in a flame,—
Of friends so false, of trusts betrayed,
Of deceiving love so deeply played—
Yes, hated of all, hating all,
I'll tread life's journey till I fall.

There are lively lines to "The Mocking Bird" and in "Farewell to Winter" revealing that love of nature which was one of the great passions of Tom Watson's life. The former are quite indicative of poetic development and are worthy of a place in this chronicle. They are:

When Phœbus from the sea doth rise,
Gently clothing the Eastern skies
With his mellow, blushing light,
Forcing back the shades of night,
When the violet lifts up his head
From its downy, velvet bed
With the clustering morning dew
Sparkling from each petal blue,
When the laborer with lightsome tread
Goes forth to seek his daily bread,
Then with rapture deep is heard
The mellow notes of the "Mocking" bird.

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

When night has thrown around her screen
Shutting out the joyful scene,
When the pale moon is on the rise,
When the stars peep from the skies,
When the expiring evening breeze
No longer sways the leafy trees,
When all nature has sunk to rest,
When man again with night is blest,
Then from some lonely tree is heard
The warbling of the "Mocking" bird.

Then there are the lines to "John Howard Payne," who wrote "Home, Sweet Home," well worthy of our study, for they reveal a really poetical feeling, born of Tom's great love of home. These are:

I've passed through Europe's proudest streets,
Hungry, ragged and cold;
While within the mansions gay
Praises my song extol.

I've seen, to hear my "Home, Sweet Home,"
The masses in tears to melt;
While there unnoticed and friendless all,
Hunger's clutch I felt.

I never had a "Home, Sweet Home,"
To glad me with domestic life,
I've spent my days forsaken by all
With poverty, in strife.

My song will live while tender thoughts
Round human hearts entwine;
But none of those who love it well
Remember that it's mine.

LAYING UP TREASURE IN BOOKS

Now bear me away, ye oceans wild
To other and distant shores,
Where the rough sea breaks upon the rock
And the ocean mountain soars.

Some distant spot my grave shall mark
In other, unknown lands,
My grave like me shall be forgot,
Unadorned by gentle hands.

The little scrapbook did not provide room for all Tom wanted it to contain. Intending to treasure it all his life, he wanted as much in the one little book as he could get. This explains the ramified interlineations and marginal notes on every page, quite foreign in subject-matter to the original entries. For example, on page 27 where the lines inscribed to John Howard Payne begin, appears a copious note on lightning and Franklin's discovery. It reads:

"Lightening appears either in the form of sharp and vivid streaks of white, purple or blue, called by Arago the Zigzag; in sheets or floods of red, white or violet light, the sheet lightening; or in . . . globes of red fire called ball lightening. The first is very destructive, the second harmless, the third most remarkable. In Devonshire one of these latter fell amongst a crowd in a church. It wounded one of the clergymen. The tower of the church was shattered. It has been supposed that ball lightening is a combination of gaseous elements of the air by the discharge of which nitre, carbon and sulphur, the elements of gunpowder, may form an important part; and that these globes are masses of explosive matter formed in the upper atmosphere. The air is converted into a solid substance.

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

After Franklin's discovery all the phenomena which had terrified the Ancients were easily explained, amending those evils which by their own excesses they so often bring upon themselves. After the discovery, the electric fluid was used as a great cure. The blood ran quicker, the limbs were stirred, the spirits were excited, the intellect aroused. The paralytic were made to walk again. The dumb made to speak, the blind to see. Yet the world was disappointed. It could not repair the ravages of disease."

Though the Civil War had been over six years, the reconstruction era that came upon its heels had remained in Tom's recollection; and, indeed, was in many ways still evident in this memorable summer of 1871 when he developed the poetic muse. It was probably just after reading of the exploits of Southern generals, and then a solemn study of the desolation the war had left, that the boy dashed off the following lines:

TO THE SOUTH

Land of the South, Oh, do not despair
There is a future, glory waits you there!
Though now the darkest gloom hangs o'er you,
Though the cloud of misfortune looms up before you,
Though bleeding now by the oppressor's hand,
Though the bird of — has flown from your land,
Though exhausted the strength of your red right-hand,
Though overrun with invaders your beautiful land,
Though smoking ruins your country reveals,
Though destroyed the harvests of your well tilled fields,
Though the flowers of thy youth sleep 'neath the cold sod,
Though the dust of thy bravest by every footfall is trod,
Though the morning dew falls upon Johnson's grave,

LAYING UP TREASURE IN BOOKS

Though icy the features of Pelham the brave,
Though the dashing Stuart, the gay cavalier,
Rest heavily upon his bloody bier,
Though the Spirit of Morgan, the raider, has fled,
Though the brave Zollicoffer is ranked with the dead,
Though Bartow leads his band no more,
Though Jackson's guns have ceased to roar,
Yet look to the future, there will soon be a light
To lead thee from this dreary night,
Yet will the olive thy brow entwine,
Yet will thy name among nations shine,
Soon will the clouds that darken thee clear,
Soon will the bird of peace reappear,
Soon will thine hand its strength regain,
Soon will cease the Yankee thy soil to stain,
Soon will thy ruins cease to be seen,
Soon will thy fields again be green,
Yes, soon will come that shining ray
To lead us forth to glorious day!

The effusions, born of budding love, continue; and one is found which appears to commemorate a rift in the hitherto smoothly running stream of the affair between Tom and Theodosia. Dubbing her his "Lost Haidee," the poem draws out the theme, "When I Think of Thee."

However, the collection of love lines was not to be always dear to the heart of their creator. Going back to the little book, just how much later it is impossible to say, Tom, in a vein presaging the future man of burning satire, lays to the innocent verses the blasting diatribe of "Puppy love puke of the most unadulterated kind." Here a veritable key to the man. He would not spare even himself if he saw that which merited his ridicule. Experienc-

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

ing the disgust which probably every man feels of his first efforts at love lyrics, Watson had the courage to put his in writing.

Statistics along almost every conceivable line intersperse the main entries of the boyhood collection. There are excerpts from the famous authors, and data on the population and products of various countries. Examples are:

"The earliest ocean telegraph was laid by the Messrs. Brett, of England, across the British channel."

"The knowing ones tell us that the only way to get pure Port wine is to go to O'porte, raise the grapes, press the wine, put it into the cask yourself, and ride on it all the way home."

Tom doubtless learned that this youthful statement would apply with far more force later than when it was penned.

"The whole number of lunatics, idiots and persons of unsound mind in England and Wales in January of the present year (1872) was 58,640, being an increase of 9,885 upon the cases recorded on 1st Jan. 1871."

"France has 4,500,000 acres of vineyards, producing 900,000,000 gallons of wine annually, or an acreage average of 200 gallons per acre. About two-ninths of it are exported, leaving about 700,000,000 gallons to be drunk by 38,000,000 French people, or 18 gallons to each person annually."

"The following is a fashionable way of playing a three-handed game of cards in Texas. The first holds the cards, the second a revolver, and the coroner the inquest."

"A Scotchman who had put up at an inn was asked the next morning how he had spent the night. 'Ah, man,' replied Donald, 'nae very well either, but I was much

LAYING UP TREASURE IN BOOKS

better off than the bugs, for ne'er a one o' them closed an e'e the night.' "

The celebrated journal of gentility, *Godey's Lady's Book*, was still in popular favor when Tom was compiling his first scrapbook, and he copied some of its contents. The articles which attracted him appear mainly to have been those of an historical or statistical nature, or detailing ancient customs. One dealing with the history of the ring as an ornament and token, one on chains and bracelets, another on stockings, and one on archery were copied.

In January, 1872, visioning just a few more months before he would leave high school, Tom indited a quite diverting poem "To Greenway Academy," as he named it. There is nothing to indicate that the poem referred to any other school than the one at Thomson, and it evidently celebrates the opening after the Christmas holidays. The lines are probably the best in his collection, striking a humorous note, and are certainly of the widest appeal. Here they are:

Greenway Academy, awake
From thy long silent slumbering!
Let again thy pillars shake
To noisy students lumbering!

'Tis long ago since through thy halls
The blackgum switch resounded;
'Tis long ago since 'mid loud squalls
In pain the thrashed have bounded.

'Tis long since here the teacher's chair
To boys was an awful throne;
And spiders' webs have long hung where
Hated maps have shone.

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

But now again thou art awake,
The webs are cleared away;
Now again the naughty quake
Through fear of a slap all day.

Old Nathan is now the dreaded king,
Full well he knows to rule;
And painfully the switch to swing
O'er this most idle school.

How like a fretted king he looks,
With his rod beside him lying,
To the boy who from his Latin books
To recite his lesson is trying.

Oh what a pleasant sight you see
As you cast your eye around,
Boys from learning A. B. C.
To scanning Greek are found.

By our side sits Edgar, hammering Greek,
Although he hammers in vain;
For though he's been on it for at least a week,
Puppy love is on the brain.

In our rear is Truman, plain Latin prose
Trying in vain to translate,
For as he further onward goes
To be more troubled is his fate.

Before us is George, most advanced of the school,
Who often old Horace doth curse,
And thinks that he was a troublesome fool
To write such difficult verse.

To the left is Watson who tries to ride
Pegasus, the steed of the Muses;

LAYING UP TREASURE IN BOOKS

But though he often starts him along,
To fly Pegasus refuses.

Now my dear Mack, this is my conclusion—
But be sure to let him not know it—
That though sometimes he has an effusion,
In this world he'll ne'er make a poet.

In the corner's another, Smith is his name,
A name that you don't often hear,
Who is proudly hoping with his breast in a flame
To enter Class Junior next year.

Poor Carlo! I think his delusive hopes
Must soon be torn from on high;
For if he so slowly in Cæsar mopes
Can he swiftly through Horace fly?

Poor fellow: I fear, I very much fear
(Though, of course, I can't certainly tell)
That if he sees Soph by the first of next year
He'll do exceedingly well.

.
Greenway! for the present adieu!
'Fore the end of this year we see
You'll make me very tired of you
Or you'll be worried with me.

Tom frankly sets down a "list of the 'Yellow Backs'
I'm ashamed to say I read long ago." Here is the list:

*Wild Bill, Highwayman's Stratagem, The Lynchers
of Arkansas, Prairie Pete, Bride for Life, Tales of Mar-
ried Life, Demon of the Desert, Claude's Last Bullet,
The Duke's Motto, White Chief's Bride, Black Bess,*

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

Ticket of Leave Man, Brierly the Outlaw, Claude in his Dungeon, The Wreckers' Victim, The Beautiful Cigar Girl, Claude in the Convent, The Red Chamber, The Gypsy's Revenge, Claude and the Abbess, The Desperado, El Dorado, Claude and the Duchess, Captain Paul Jones, The Terror of the Mines, Claude to the Rescue, Old Pike, Death to the Traitor, The Headless Horseman, Wicked Will, Duval in Newgate, Secrets of the Great City, The Mountain Trapper, Highwayman's Bride, Turtle Catcher, Lucy Thornton, Beautiful Unknown, The Cask of Gold, Man in Search of a Wife, Duval at Bay, Adventures of Jonathan Wild, The Silver Hand, Paul Jones, The Giant Hunter, Steel Armor, Hard Scrabble, The Floating Island, Lena Rivers, Rob Roy of the R. M., Struggles for Life, Solitary Hunter, Detective Tales, The Prairie Flower, The Young Detective.

But already his reading had progressed through an amazing quantity of the best books. Early was developed that hunger for books which afterwards made him one of the most widely read men of his day. He records a "list of books read up to 1872." The record, if true, and we have no reason to believe that it is not, for it was written only for his own eyes, reveals that Tom Watson was in all probability the best read 15-year-old boy of whom we have any record. The list he gives us follows:

Goodrich's *Histories of Rome, England, The United States*; Goldsmith's *Histories of Greece and England*; Quackenbos' *History of the United States*; Worcester's *Histories*; Macaulay's *History of England*; Gibbon's *History of Rome*; Stephens' *War Between the States*; Pollard's *Southern History of the War*; Botta's *Revolutionary War*; Whelpley's *Historical Compound*; Rob-

LAYING UP TREASURE IN BOOKS

inson's *Outlines of History*; Smith's *History of English Literature*; Parley's *Universal History*; *Historical Collection of Georgia*; *History of California*; Abbott's *Lives of Napoleon, Mary Queen of Scots, Madame Roland, Hannibal and Richard Coeur de Lion*; *Life of Alexander Hamilton*; Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*; Bloodgood's *Life of Hogg*; Daniel's *Life of Jackson*; *Memoirs of Judson*; Smith's *Gems of Female Biography*; Cook's *Life of Lee*; *Life of Luther*; *Life of Christ*; *Life of Tom Thumb*; Hill's *Life of Captain John Smith*; Jamison's *Life of Bertrand du Guesclin*; Barnum's *Life of Barnum*; Headly's *Life of Josephine*; *Life of Wesley*; Poetical Works of Homer, Shakespeare, Byron, Scott, Cowper, Milton, Wordsworth, Poe, Tennyson, Beattie, Hemans, Pollock, Gray, Swift, Pope, Moore, Burns, Goldsmith, Hood, and Collins; Cooke's *Wearing of the Gray*; Scott's *Ivanhoe, Kenilworth, The Talisman*; Porter's *The Scottish Chiefs*; Hogg's *Anecdotes of Scott*; Hogg's *Winter Evening Tales*; Collins' *Woman in White*; *Queens of Henry VIII*; *Queens of England*; Prime's *Travels*; *Souvenirs of Travel*; *Louise of Prussia*; *Crown Jewels*; Southworth's *Deserted Wife*; Harland's *Alone*; *Plebeians and Patricians*; Longstreet's *Georgia Scenes*; Ford's *Grace Truman*; Aiken and Barbauld's *Evenings at Home*; *The Arabian Nights*; Duval's *Big Foot Wallace*; Ford's *Morgan and His Men*; DeFoe's *Robinson Crusoe*; *Don John of Austria*; Fielding's *Tom Jones*; Holmes' *Tempest and Sunshine*; Evans' *St. Elmo*; *Polar and Tropical Regions*; Edmondson's *Self-Government*; *Friendship's Offering*; LaBaune's *Campaign*; *Children of the Frontier*; Wesley's *Sermons*; Cox's *Reading and Speaking*; Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*; Thomas' *Trav-*

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

els in the East; The Two Cecílias; The Pillar of Fire; The Court of David; A Prince of the House of David; Jones' Wild Western Scenes; Dickens' Oliver Twist and Pickwick Papers; Mexican War and its Heroes; Baron Trenck; Swiss Family Robinson; Fowler's Sexual Science; Rifle, Axe, and Saddle Bags; Goldsmith's Vicar of Wakefield; Swift's Gulliver's Travels and Tales of a Tub; Cervantes' Don Quixote; Letters of Junius; Irving's Crayon Miscellany; Prescott's History of the Conquest of Mexico; Reynolds' Robert Bruce; Travels in Africa; Sawyer's History of Prostitution; Chain of Sacred Wonders; Stories of Hans Christian Anderson; Johnston's English Classics; Todd's Student's Manual; Drury's Light and Shade; A Thousand and One Jokes; Robbins' Ancient History; Quackenbos' Summary of United States History; Rutledge's History of the Chinese Empire; Magoon's Living Orators and Orators of America; Sparks' Memories of Fifty Years; Francis' Orators of the Age; McWaters' Knots Untied; Irving's Rip Van Winkle; Dickens' Nicholas Nickleby, Old Curiosity Shop, Great Expectations, Bleak House, Little Dorrit, David Copperfield, Barnaby Rudge, Our Mutual Friend, Martin Chuzzlewit, Dombey & Son, American Notes.

And to these we must add the better known monthly magazines, for he appears to have subscribed to some and borrowed many. The truth is that as soon as Tom could read the English language he became a veritable sponge for all the literature he could lay hands upon. This explains why, in after years, he had such a phenomenal amount of information at his finger ends when he began to write himself.

CHAPTER V

ADVANCING HORIZON

DREAMS of being in future great were abstracting much of the thought of this lad whose spirit was already kindling to inspired purpose. Tom knew he must not lag behind if he would cope with the world and its best men. He had already outgrown the small town school. He cared little whether he finished its irregular curriculum or not. He wanted to go to college. He wanted the best education he could get.

And so did Tom's mother. Mrs. Watson was now dreaming dreams for her boy, in whom she saw so much. She saw what had to be done; the boy must be given the best opportunities that could be afforded him. Many the hours of the long evenings she spent talking to John Watson about Tom's future. She told her husband that Tom was unlike the other boys; that if he were put to work on the farm when his early schooling had just whetted his appetite for knowledge, it would break his spirit—destroy him. She knew it. In her deeply spiritual nature the mother undertood what John Watson was utterly incapable of appreciating: the cruelty it would be not to give Tom a chance in college, where he could go further—where there would be work to engage and wear down that restless mind. It had to be done. The thirst for knowledge, for new tasks for the rapidly developing mind, must not be overlooked. She knew that, for Tom, it would be a fatal mistake.

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

So it was decided. The Watsons were Baptists. That is to say, they were of that persuasion. Mrs. Watson was a member of that church, though John Watson never joined any church. Mercer University at Macon, a Baptist institution, was the logical college, and was Tom's choice besides. When he left the school at Thomson in the late spring of 1872 he was nearly 16 years old. He made his plans to go the following October, the beginning of the new term.

But most of the plans were made by his mother, for she it was who got together all her small savings to start her boy off with the best chances affordable. At that time the hand of fortune was already turning against John Watson, and his faithful wife was trying to save him every penny. She had a little money and this she gave her boy. But he was ill supplied at that, and was compelled to take advantage of the free tuition plan for poor boys. His board, books and clothes were all his father could provide him.

John Watson did not object to Tom's going to college, though he saw little need of it. He had never been very far along educational lines, and what had been enough for him and the majority of his associates ought to have been enough for Tom. But he would leave it to the boy's mother. If she could fix it up, all right. He would let her have a little money—as much as he felt he could turn loose at that time—and the good wife and the ambitious lad could work it out to suit themselves.

Tom was overjoyed to know he was to get the chance. Oh, how he wanted to get to that Mercer library; how he wanted to see more books, new books, books he had never heard of, where there were just plenty of them, so he

ADVANCING HORIZON

could read to his heart's content. He wanted to know what men in every age had thought; to learn what men and women of every land had done—the great men, and great women.

Then he wanted to measure swords with other intellectual youths in the class room—in Latin, in Greek, in mathematics—and by all means in the forum of the debating society. He wanted to appear before audiences, though they were but indolent students, and cause them to cease thinking the way they were thinking and think the way he thought upon many a question of great moment at that time. He already knew what many of those questions were. He believed he had already thought upon them more than the average youth.

There was one of Tom's teachers who, he firmly believed, understood him better than any of the others. She had taught him only music, but he loved her best of all his teachers. Miss Belle Hanson had known him from a baby, and he had been one of her class of twelve she taught at the home of her aunt, Mrs. Jane Ramsay, who lived near the Watsons. Today she recalls her first picture of Tom—a barefoot shaver, astride a big grey horse, his legs dangling as the horse trotted. And she and Tom had often gone riding in the buggy. The horse would get his tail over the reins, as has been the immemorial custom of horses, and Tom would try to get him to let go of them. In so doing Tom had let the horse run away, on one occasion, break through the woods and turn the buggy over. The two narrowly escaped injury, but had a big laugh over it.

So it was Miss Belle whom Tom remembered, among his teachers, as he set out for Macon, Ga., to enter college

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

that October of 1872. And he wrote in her honor these little verses:

'Tis true that all poets sing
To their friends a last farewell,
But I, though laughter ring,
Will sing thee adieu, Miss Belle.

Then wishing to study the lore—
Treasured in every age—
'Twas thee that opened the door
That shut in the classic page.

There were none but two in all,
Were friends of more than a day;
One I have seen early fall,
The other is far away.

With a Templar's glass before me,
The heart bidding a farewell,
While "loved recollection" 's o'er me
I drink to my friend, Miss Belle.

CHAPTER VI

ELOQUENCE, THE GIFT OF THE GODS

By a curious turn of fate Tom entered Mercer University as a freshman at the same time Epenetus Alexis Steed entered as a professor. "Leck" Steed, as Tom called him, had been chosen to fill the chair of Latin, and he was to receive at the youth's hands even higher tributes than when Principal of the Thomson High School. Steed had fired Tom's ambition by telling him what he could do if he tried, and urged the boy's father to send him to college. Many years later Watson drew a brief but vivid picture of this somewhat mysterious preacher-teacher, who "left no lasting memorial to his genius. Only, as through a glass, darkly, you may see him in a book called *Bethany*, written by one in whom he, the unambitious, kindled the spark of an ambition that will never die."

Steed, a man of majestic mien and, when aroused, of impassioned eloquence, exerted the most profound influence in Tom's life of any instructor he ever had. Tom studied Steed as a curious compound upon the face of the earth. A veritable genius, he was born tired. At this teacher's desk in the Thomson high school, he was too lazy to reach over and tap the bell. Slouched down in his chair, he would raise his foot and let it fall of sheer weight upon the bell. Why, with his unusual gifts, his deep learning, his marvelous eloquence by which he swept men, women and children off their feet, he possessed no am-

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

bition, no driving power to make a name for himself in the world, was a riddle to Watson.

"Leck" Steed, graduated with second honor at Mercer in 1851, Professor of Ancient Languages at Mississippi College, Clinton, Miss., Pastor of the Thomson Baptist Church and head of its high school, and occupant of Mercer's Chair of Latin 1872-1885, died on November 9th of the last year to go down into oblivion save for what his most brilliant student did to perpetuate the memory of "that great head, that was fit to bear a crown."

All through his two years at Mercer Tom had occasion to make memoranda of Steed, but it was six years after the youth left college that occurred the incident of which he wrote many years later. In 1880 Tom attended commencement exercises at Mercer when "the crack orator of the State" had been invited to make the address of the occasion. Tom's record says the speech was very elegant and superb and that everybody was satisfied. By some arrangement the faculty had put Steed on the program to fill in. He ambled to the front of the rostrum—"the indolent giant." The speech of the visitor had kindled within him those latent fires he knew many men affected but which in him were born.

"I knew he would carry that crowd by storm—would rise, rise into the very azure of eloquence, and hover above us, like an eagle in the air."

Nor did Alexis fail to do it. The audience cheered and cried. He so far outshone the noted speaker of the day that everybody felt sorry for him. Tom says he did not applaud.

"But I looked at my old teacher, through a mist of happy tears; and my lips quivered uncontrollably. He

ELOQUENCE, GIFT OF THE GODS

saw it and I think he was deeply pleased. We talked of it later in our chummy way; and we laughed over the surprise he had given everybody. I never saw him again. I don't think he ever made another speech."

"Leck" Steed was the man who often said to Tom: "Fame and glory are not worth the price you pay; let the other fellow struggle and then wake up to find it so."

But in this he utterly failed to convince the boy. Tom only studied him all the more—and dreamed his own dreams of fame.

Mercer at Macon was in its infancy when Tom entered college. The institution had been moved from Penfield, Ga., a convention of Baptists, who controlled it, having looked favorably upon the strong arguments made for the city of Macon, which donated \$125,000 and an ample site for new buildings. One of the arguments was "Macon's unequalled health record." The institution had just begun to function in its new home in rented buildings, and new ones were in course of construction. The mess hall had to be used for class rooms as well as for boarders.

Dr. Archibald J. Battle, some 45 years of age, was President of the college. He was a man who was more marked for his labored attainments than for his natural gifts. He possessed "a lustreless grey eye," and a very ordinary presence, but it was conceded that he was the best man on the faculty for President.

Professor William G. Woodfin, who claimed to have learned Greek solely by his own efforts after he left school, had the chair of that language and its literature.

Shelton P. Sanford, somewhat noted as the author of an *Analytical Arithmetic*, headed the department of

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

Mathematics, and, all in all, was the most popular teacher in the college.

One Professor Willet had charge of the science department. He graduated from Mercer in 1846 with first honor and remained as an instructor. Tom had no classes under him.

E. A. Steed, the most exceptional intellect on the faculty, had the chair of Latin, as already stated, and was the most widely known.

There were other instructors, but they do not appear to have touched the life of the subject of this biography.

A month before Tom left Thomson for college he made a memorandum to the effect that he had resolved to follow the precepts of Todd's *Students' Manual*, a typical advice book of the day for the youths, largely responsible for the strait-jacketed, disciplined groove their minds were supposed to follow. ✓The only thing in the Manual which modern ideas would condone—in fact the only thing in it that would not excite ridicule—was the injunction to brush the teeth, one of the innovations of the '70's. According to Todd, for example, a student should have a plan for each succeeding day. He had to know ahead of time every single act, regardless of how insignificant, he was going to commit, and schedule it mentally. That such a course was calculated to drive to insanity every person who undertook it appears to have never dawned upon the regimen expert, Todd. It was just such books as this which made the "old-timers" of today so stiff-necked about the changing requirements of education. They thought for years, and many still think, that the crack-brained manuals, which made their whole burden the pusillanimous

ELOQUENCE, GIFT OF THE GODS

and negligible things of life, were the last word of truth and the gospel of life.

It is little wonder that Tom Watson—the turbulent, uncontrollable Tom—later wrote: “By George! Forgot all about Todd at College.”

Forgetting all about the mediocre drivel of the Todds, Tom plunged into more of Poe, Byron, Milton and other poets, as well as the dissertations of Carlyle, Johnson and other essayists when he was made assistant librarian of the Phi Delta Literary Society his first month at Mercer. And he devoured with such avidity the historical works of Josephus, Hume, Alexander H. Stephens and countless others that he was dubbed by his professors a “history hog.” He read every branch of literature, adding to his mental library book after book; and very carefully he perused the lives and speeches of Mirabeau, Calhoun, Clay, Webster and Benton. And it seemed that he never forgot anything; that his mind was a filing case of knowledge, card-indexed.

Little wonder that Tom was a dreaded adversary in debate, whether on the floor of his own society or when joined with such of its members as went forth to meet the Ciceronians.

It was just a few days after he entered Mercer that he made his first speech in the Phi Delta Society in the debate on the question: “Would the Removal of the Negroes from the South be Beneficial to the People?” The form of the questions for debate did not include the “Resolved,” of use later, but was always in the interrogative. Tom held forth in favor of removal. He said there was authority for the statement that there came a time in

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

the affairs of nations when it was resolved to do away with all slaves save negroes—that the negro became the universal slave. Still later the Americans virtually monopolized the slave trade, with the result that luxury had undermined slaveholding sections and a terrible war had devastated the South.

“I do not prophesy that the white and the black will war with each other until one is exterminated, but I say if they live together in harmony, History will be searched in vain to furnish a similar example,” he declared.

Eloquence that would do credit to a seasoned statesman came from Tom a week later in Phi Delta, when he joined issue on the memorable question: “Does Knowledge Exert More Influence upon Mankind than Wealth?” He had the side which championed Wealth.

“A golden cup from a Persian fugitive silenced the eloquence of its master, Demosthenes. Two millions of golden dollars raised Julian to the throne of the Roman Empire, to the empire of the world. Peru felt its influence when, lured on by the hope of riches, the Spaniard threw her children into slavery and swept her land with fire and sword. Mexico felt its force when decaying lay the bodies of her slaughtered sons, when the flames arose from her towns and dwellings, when the chain of servitude was thrown around her, never to be removed. India feels its force as the iron hand of Tyranny presses harder upon her neck, as England treads harder upon her servile neck.”

After tracing the decay of Greece and Rome to affluence, Tom replied to an opponent’s argument that the influence of money was merely local.

“When Napoleon was invincible to his enemies and had

ELOQUENCE, GIFT OF THE GODS

raised himself to the throne of France, it was by the golden influence of Pitt that his power was gradually broken, until the star of his destiny set forever. . . . To-day the Rothschilds . . . make their power felt in all Europe. No war is waged without them; no loan is raised without them. . . .

"And daily, Sir, we see those of knowledge humbly waiting for favor at the door of the rich."

Tom scorned to deliver a speech prepared by someone else or copied from a book. His were thought out by himself, when the midnight oil was being burned.

But among these early speeches there was none into which Tom put more of his soul than the one in which he championed the side of Thought in the debate on: "Have Men of Thought been more Beneficial to the World than Men of Action?" Tom had the side he believed in. Tracing the light of new born learning from Dante, he said:

"Then comes Copernicus, the boast of Astronomy; whose name glows upon History's page with an unpaling lustre. 'Twas he who broke the 'crystal phantasm' so dear to the ages of darkness. 'Twas his mind alone that could soar aloft through the mazes of space and point out to ignorant mankind the revolutions of the heavenly bodies. 'Tis the eagle alone who can meet the sun with an unquailing eye."

Then visioning the power of Thought, itself, to portray Action, the young debater broke forth:

"We go into our library and like a grand panorama all history unrolls before us. We breathe the morning air of the world while the scent of Eden's roses yet lingers in it; when it was thickened only by the sigh of Eve. We

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

see the Pyramids building. We hear Memnon murmur as the first morning sun touches him. We see the Sphinx when she first begins to ask her eternal question. We sit as in a theatre; the stage is time; the play is the fate of the world. What a spectacle it is! What kingly pomp! What processions pass by! What crowds of captives are dragged at the wheels of conquerors!"

Then Tom closed in upon his opponents, by detailing the fates of the chief men of action. The four men who lead the world in this sphere, he said, were Alexander, Hannibal, Cæsar and Napoleon. The first climbed to dizzy heights and died in a disgraceful debauch; the second, after devastating both Rome and Carthage, died a suicide; the third "dyed his garments in the blood of one million of his foes" and sowed the seeds which ruined his own country with civil war; and the fourth "made the earth quake beneath the power of his tread" but left a legacy of war in which France was still engaged, in the struggle with Prussia. And then a contrast in allegory:

"Before me rises the altar of the protecting deity of mankind. Two devotees stand beside it, the man of action and the man of thought. Action stands forward and proffers his sacrifice. 'Tis stained with the tears of the widow, the orphan, the childless. 'Tis polluted by the rapine of lust and vice. 'Tis clouded by the smoke of the burnt town and the ruined city. 'Tis crimsoned by the blood of the innocent babe, the unprotected wife, the sleeping family. With a shudder of horror trembling through her frame, the goddess turns away, rejects the horrible offering.

"Then comes the offering of the man of thought. 'Tis hallowed as a production which has civilized the world,

ELOQUENCE, GIFT OF THE GODS

which has raised man from ignorance and barbarity to refinement and culture, has cheapened the necessities of life, has opened new channels for the onward flow of commerce. The goddess reaches forth her hand and places upon his brow the never fading laurels of fame.”

CHAPTER VII

DESTINY PROTECTS HER OWN

IN January 1873 a blow struck Mercer from which it came near closing for the balance of the term. The blow was not only at the solidarity of the school but also at the health boast of the city of Macon. It was a scourge of meningitis, and caused a suspension of activities from the latter part of January until March 3rd.

The epidemic put the students in a panic. One morning Tom's room mate, James Hamilton, came in and told Tom that George West (brother of John T. West, widely known Thomson lawyer) was dangerously ill. Before going to the debate scheduled in Phi Delta Society, Tom went by to see young West and was greatly surprised to see his face in a swollen condition and the lad very ill, for on the previous evening he had been in the best of health. Hamilton and West were also Thomson boys. Hamilton went on to the society meeting, but was complaining too. The next morning West was worse and Hamilton was too ill to go to church. Tom Burdett, of Washington, Ga., and Charles Booker reported that West was delirious, and Tom prepared to wire his father, but the boy improved and asked that this not be done. Hamilton grew worse and wrote his mother to let him come home, but he was so weak Tom had to fold and address the letter. Professor Steed came to Tom's room and remained until near midnight and told Tom to get Burdett to sit up with Hamilton the remainder of the night. Tom went for Bur-

DESTINY PROTECTS HER OWN

dett, who said he would come as soon as he finished writing a letter. On his way back to his room, Tom could hear poor West shouting in his delirium.

Nobody, up to that time, knew what the malady was. Tom and Burdett sat up with Hamilton until 2 or 3 o'clock, when, Hamilton appearing quiet, Burdett went back to his room and Tom got in the bed with Hamilton.

Tom awoke at 9 o'clock the next morning and went for a doctor for Hamilton. West was barely conscious and Professor Steed telegraphed his father to come to Macon at once. The doctor examined Hamilton, declared he was not very sick and wrote a prescription for a cold. However, it now began to dawn on the doctors that West had meningitis. The same diagnosis was pronounced for Hamilton later that day, he having become delirious. Back by West's room Tom went enroute for more medicine, only to find the poor boy dying. Weeping youths stood around his bed, for he was greatly loved. Shortly he breathed his last. His father and mother, from whom he had separated just a few weeks before when he spent the Christmas holidays at home, reached him too late. The dread disease which had stolen upon the college like a thief in the night was a swift reaper.

Some of the students began packing their trunks. Some left on the next train. Tom had to call in help in watching at the bedside of Hamilton. His mother and step-father came; Tom gave up his room to them and went down in town to find a boarding place.

Then Bennett, Tripp, Mott, Denmark and Booker were stricken down. More boys left for home, scared as they had a right to be, though Tom expressed the opinion that some of them scared themselves sick.

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

In less than two days after West's death Bennett, whom Tom called the best hearted boy in school, and Booker were dead, and Hamilton, Harvey, Gaulden, Tripp, Mott and Allen were in the dread grip of meningitis.

A panic seized the students. Activities were suspended and the faculty advised the boys to go home until the epidemic was over. They did not need urging. Joe Walker, of Milledgeville, did not even wait for railroad fare; he walked home. But he took meningitis with him, died himself and with him died his mother and sister.

Many of the others died after reaching home, among them Burdett, Mizell and Asbury. Mott died at the college; and Hamilton, one of the first to be stricken down, was one of the last to die. The Phi Deltas adopted resolutions upon his death. His delirium, through a comparatively long period of time when the battle was on between an unusually strong constitution and a most deadly disease, was most affecting. He would imagine he was making a speech in the Legislature or before a jury and make formal utterances to them. The poor boy longed to go home and several times sprang out of bed, catching up his overcoat, crying "Home! Home!"

Tom and Preston Johnson finally decided they too had better go home. Tom's father had now moved to Augusta and there he went to recover from the horrors of an epidemic which in a few weeks killed 15 of the Mercer boys. The college opened again March 3rd, but Tom was himself ill at home and did not get back to school until the first of May. He did not develop meningitis though several more boys died of it after the reopening. Only two or three mastered the disease, among them Gaulden, Harvey and the negro cook of the mess hall. Mr. Mc-

DESTINY PROTECTS HER OWN

Bride, superintendent of the mess hall, lost his little daughter. One boy, Daniels, never left the college during the entire panic.

Tom wrote touchingly of the tragedy and how the old hall looked with so many windows darkened. He spoke of West as the young eagle of the sophomores and pride of the Phi Deltas, and of Bennett as having a heart which knew no superior.

"A hundred years may wreath my head with a snowy garland, but I'll never forget the boy I loved so well. The first human being I ever loved as a friend, and the only one, as a friend, I ever felt returned my affection. It is my dearest hope that we will meet in heaven. Moore was right when he said:

"Who would not strive to win a heaven,
Where all we love shall live again?"

CHAPTER VIII

A BOY WITH THE REST OF THEM

Just after Tom's return to Mercer in May 1873, another fatality occurred which seemed to the boys to finish off a year of tragedy. A scaffold, used in erecting the main edifice of the school's new group of buildings, fell, hurling four workmen seventy feet to the ground. Three were almost instantly killed and the fourth seriously injured. The boys were impressed with a feeling of doom, for just a few minutes before the accident a workman on the ground shouted to the foreman, who was above, that he had better stop and fix his scaffold because it was plainly too weak to support the men. The foreman answered that he was willing to risk it; but hardly had his reply reached the hearer before he was a corpse upon the ground. Another died in fifteen minutes and the third after reaching his home. The last to die was a young man who had just left his mother at home to take his first job.

The boys brooded over the shocking accident for days, coming as it did upon the heels of the last deaths among their own number from meningitis.

Yet none of these things were sufficient to submerge the spirit of mischief innate in every youth in the college. Tom was quite celebrated as a willing, if not always successful, "scrapper." He had to have at least one fight a week to keep his readily ruffled temper down. He just

A BOY WITH THE REST OF THEM

had to have a fight a week—and there were those at hand willing and waiting to accommodate him. This was so before the meningitis epidemic as well as after it.

Tom was rooming with George West a part of his first year. George always avoided the fusses and fights. There never seemed to be any occasion for his getting into an affray. If Tom wanted to have periodic flings at the other fellows, he was willing for him to do it, but he didn't see any necessity for engaging in said fights himself—especially when he hadn't been attacked, as indeed Tom had not always been when he got into a scrimmage. Tom would be suddenly precipitated into a lively tilt, George would stop and gaze on until Tom got through, or until his adversary got through, and the two would then proceed on their way.

One night, Tom, in one of his choleric moods which were not infrequent, hurled into a crowd of six or eight husky boys the vehement charge that one of them was a liar. All came to their feet at once, grossly insulted. Tom's menacing tone failed to grow calmer. In fact it aggravated the charge by conveying the impression that he didn't care who was the liar—the whole bunch could take it up. Jim Jones, a stalwart senior, twice Tom's size, decided to make Tom all the madder by barring his progress up the stairs. Not particularly insulted, he wanted some fun out of the irate Tom. Tom saw no joke—in fact Jones' conduct of derision was the most maddening thing he could have been guilty of. So Tom tore at him, striking him a vicious blow full in the face. Jones grabbed the smaller youth and would have beaten him up had the other boys not interfered. George was unruffled; he looked on calmly. For several days Jones carried a

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

lovely red spot on the right side of his nose. And, furthermore, when thereafter Tom and George came in to go upstairs to their room, they didn't find a bunch of bullies barring the path.

The old, worn out, practical jokes were played, such as taking the slats from a boy's bed or balancing a pan of water over his door. But Mercer was probably unique in this respect in that the pan-balancing was a thing that must visit every inmate of the school, regardless of threats or discipline. McBride, the superintendent of the mess hall, vainly tried persuasion, cursing and reporting. Dr. Battle threatened expulsion and the stationing of a policeman in the house with orders to arrest. But the old pan-balancing act went right on. Every man must have the pan whether he got his "dip" or not, whether Mercer continued to function or not.

Tom would let George go ahead of him when returning from recitations to their room. Therefore, George got the pan of water, if it was there. Tom would say nothing because he had just as soon see George drenched as anybody else, and he knew in all reason that a pan was poised. George always searched for the culprit, but never found him, would then go through the almost daily routine of changing clothes and drying off and taking on a look of dejection as he felt the bump on his head to see if it was getting larger, while Tom looked at him and laughed.

The Booker boys and Tom Burdett held themselves aloof, in their room, from such unmanly practices. But the rule was: everybody must get the water. It had to be done. If the pan balancing couldn't be gotten away

A BOY WITH THE REST OF THEM

with, then some other expedient must be tried. The Bookers twain and Burdett did not merely refrain from participating in the jokes. By that token they exercised their sacred right to lay down the law and make it known far and wide that it was woe to whomsoever should get caught in the pan act in their room.

Wherefore, it was known the three kept close guard of their door. Well advised of this, yet feeling it his sacred duty to carry out the time honored edict that all must get the water, Tom girded himself and went forth to meet the enemy with a pan of water. The night was propitious for riotous noise resounded throughout the hall. Tom proceeded cautiously, but the racket kept him from being heard. Arriving at the door of the Bookers' and Burdett's room, he quietly eased it open and looked in. The trio, virtuous boys, were at their table under a hot student's lamp, hard at work.

Tom dashed the water on them and slammed the door with terrific impact. It was like a flash of lightning and peal of thunder. Burdett and the Bookers leaped to their feet, raging in their sudden undoing, and stormed the hallway—but the intruder, innocent in his mission of carrying out the water law—had flown, and well he had. He had run to his room, blown out the light and jumped in bed with his clothes on.

Burdett canvassed the hall, polling each room. He got an emphatic "no" each time he said: "Jim, John, Harry, confound it, was that you that threw that pan of water?" When he got to Tom's room the roomer was snoring upon his virtuous couch. To each snore Burdett replied that Watson couldn't humbug him, that he

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

wasn't asleep. But when Tom got louder and louder, more and more like a horse, Burdett was overcome and retreated to his room in disgust.

One night Tom and George were returning from down town when they decided to play a trick on one of the boys boarding in the down town section. They stopped in front of the house, eyeing it while planning the best way of entrance and escape. The Macon police knew a Mercer boy as far as they could see him.

Suddenly George said two cops were after them and off he started for the mess hall, as fast as he could run. Tom didn't wait for an explanation, but put out right behind him. Fat, George puffed and snorted as he tried to make the up grade. He would stump his toe and fall. Then he'd scramble and paw the ground, trying to get up—loping along on all fours because he was afraid to slow down, and yelling for Tom to wait. They ran at full speed half a mile or more, and next morning regaled all the boys at breakfast with a yarn about a hairbreadth escape from twelve policemen.

CHAPTER IX

YOUTH WILL FIND A WAY

As the spring term of his freshman year was drawing to a close, Tom remembered that he had little money and would have still less the following fall. The problem of how to remain in college was worrying him day and night. He knew he could not count on much help from his father, who was in financial straits of the direst kind, and he knew no one from whom he could borrow. His only expedient was to work during the summer vacation, save every penny he could, and try to have enough money, with what little his people could raise for him, to enter his sophomore year.

So he applied to Professor B. M. Zettler, County School Commissioner of Bibb County, for an examination in order to qualify for a county school. The day appointed for the regular test was June 28th, just before commencement at Mercer. Tom reported at Professor Zettler's office as did five others—three ladies and two men. Only one of the ladies appealed to him, one only among them being young and good-looking. One was some fifty summers old.

About 10 o'clock Professor Zettler opened the examination with spelling. All succeeded in this. Then ten sweeping questions in geography went on the blackboard. The young lady of ordinary appearance went down in de-

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

feat. She explained that the patrons of the school she had taught required no knowledge of geography. English grammar found all passing well prepared. Then arithmetic was reached. The elderly lady was knocked out here. She said she had been teaching a long time but had never carried a class beyond fractions. But her excuse was not as bad as her conduct, for Professor Zettler caught her trying to look in her book.

The women and Tom finished the test about the same time and left the office, the two men still working away. The examination was on Saturday. They were to get a report on their papers Monday. On Sunday morning Professor Zettler and Tom walked away from Mulberry Street Methodist Church, where they had heard Dr. Battle's commencement sermon. To Tom's surprise, the county school commissioner told him his paper was the best in the lot, and that he would recommend him to any board of school trustees. Monday he gave Tom his certificate and promised to aid him in getting a school.

Tom's first year in college came to a close July 2nd when the orations of honor graduates were made. W. E. Reynolds received first honor and Wylie Arnold, second honor. Reynolds was a Ciceronian and a member of Tom's fraternity, Sigma Alpha Epsilon. Arnold was a member of Tom's literary society, the Phi Delta, and of the Phi Delta Theta fraternity.

It was the custom in the Phi Delta Society for the seniors to make parting addresses and a junior to respond. On July 1st the meeting for this purpose was held, and three seniors, Messrs. Smith, Arnold and Callaway, made farewell talks. Joe Jones, of the juniors, responded. The chair then called on a sophomore for a talk, but he re-

YOUTH WILL FIND A WAY

fused. Tom was then called on for the freshman class and responded in a fitting address.

Professor Zettler had told Tom he could have Hamlin Academy, fifteen miles from Macon on the Columbus road, for his summer school, if he could secure the consent of its local managers. To secure this Tom put out in a buggy on the hot journey on the morning of July 4th. About 10 o'clock he came to the home of one Dr. Bonner, a manager. Tom stated the situation to him and exhibited his certificate. The man eyed Tom a little and said he looked mighty young, but he would give him a trial. He wrote out a statement to that effect and Tom took it to each of the other managers, securing their signatures without difficulty. One manager, James Gates, gave Tom dinner before he made his return trip in the heat of the afternoon.

The next day Tom received from Professor Zettler his teacher's outfit and some good advice. He always remembered the kindness of the county school commissioner, and always looked forward to a time when he might return this kindness. On the evening of July 5th he proceeded to the home of one Dr. Worsham, one mile from his school, where he was to make his home during his summer teaching.

On the morning of July 7th Tom Watson, less than seventeen years old, opened his first school in the Big Warrior District of Bibb County with five "scholars." He classified these, gave them lessons and dismissed them until the next day. On the second day there were seven pupils and the number did not increase until the following week when he opened with ten—two of them grown young men. By the first of August he had forty.

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

The pupils ranged from tots just beginning to big stalwart country boys four or five years Tom's senior and girls of more than his age. The curriculum, if such the course of study could be called, was not beyond elementary English grammar and arithmetic. The small girls were a pleasure to teach, and the small boys the most trouble. The grown girls and boys were treated as ladies and gentlemen, and any indecorum on their part was referred to the board of trustees, though Tom did not permit disparity in age of teacher and student to admit of disrespect being shown him. And if a little fellow was unruly, he called for a blackgum switch and wore him out. His policy of engendering love and respect between teacher and pupil, however, made much whipping unnecessary. With a uniformity that was without exception all hated grammar, and in penmanship pursued the plan of the more paper written up the more progress.

Tom studied the eccentricities as well as the merits of his pupils. There was 18-year-old Jim Tool, who seized his pen as though writing were a matter of life or death; Rod Hamlin, 17, the school bully and tormentor of the little fellows; the formal and ceremonious George Holly, who each morning bowed low to his teacher before taking his seat, and who called all the girls "Miss"; Addie Callaway, the nice little girl with big brown eyes of loving simplicity; Lena Callaway, who always "stood head" in her spelling class; and Charles Kitchens, the slow and deliberate youth who ploughed a dirty furrow under each line in his reader by sliding his finger along to keep pace with his tongue. And, of course, Ella Gates, 27, must not be overlooked. She came one day only, bedecked with garish jewelry, to return no more because 17-year-old

YOUTH WILL FIND A WAY

"Mr. Watson was too small a man for her to sit and look at all day."

Tom liked teaching. It was a splendid chance for him to review his own elementary studies. But the chief value was that he now had a regimen for abating that violent temper. Here it had to be controlled, or teacher would disgrace himself.

On August 16th Tom went to Macon to collect his pay for July. Professor Zettler gave him an order on Treasurer Cubbedge for \$50 which the treasurer politely informed Tom he could not pay because there was no money in the treasury. This was quite a disturbing blow. Tom didn't like it a bit. Teach school in the heat of July and not be able to collect a cent for it? He hadn't expected such a thing. He went to Colonel Lawton, head of the Planters Bank, a Mercer official, and Tom's Sunday School teacher at the Second Baptist Church in Macon. Tom asked Colonel Lawton to let him have twenty or thirty dollars and take the order as security. To his horror, the man refused to do it.

Tom had gone to town mainly to get certain articles of clothing he just had to have. And he couldn't get them without money as he had no credit. After canvassing all the merchants in town, only to be refused by all, Tom's old friend "Leck" Steed came to his aid. The big hearted professor took Tom to Mr. Callaway, a leading merchant, and arranged for the boy to trade out as much of his pay voucher as he wished, which was \$17.50. After listening with deep interest to the youth's enthusiastic story of his success teaching in the country, Professor Steed told Tom of the sudden death in Thomson of Steed's sister, the wife of Dr. Pitts. He said he would

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

have to go to Thomson for a few days and intended to stay at the home of A. J. Story, father of Theodosia.

The news made Tom wistful and melancholy. Theodosia! He never heard her name but it recalled to his mind that maid of mystery. Not so beautiful, not so attractive as many other girls he had known, yet he remembered the look deep in her clear, blue eyes that seemed to bind him to her. Even then he did not know whether she had ever loved him. She had never said. When he had so often asked her in former days, she had only looked away. He still loved her.

The country school was for three months. Tom was making more money than he had ever made before, and was not becoming fatigued. He enjoyed his work. Late in September he closed his school amid the tears of all the girls, not unmingled with a sadness of his own, though he had thought to close and rest would be a joy. The prize he had offered to the best speller went to Lena Callaway, one of the brightest students he had ever known. He had won the esteem of his patrons and the love of his pupils. He now went home to Augusta to rest a few days before returning to college.

CHAPTER X

TO THE GOD OF STORMS

EARLY in October Tom was back at Mercer, anxious to show more excellent qualities as a sophomore than he had shown as a freshman.

The Phi Delta Society reorganized on October 4th. The officers elected for the new year were Lyons, president; Proctor, vice-president; Watson, recording secretary; Daniels, monitor; and Golden, chaplain. Tom was also named on a committee to revise the society's by-laws. A week later the Phi Deltas and the Ciceronians decided to hold a joint debate. Four men represented each society. For Phi Delta J. H. Jones, E. T. Watson, E. A. Keese and a boy named Cheney were chosen. The Ciceronians named A. Marshall, Joel Butts, Benjamin Ivey and one Pattison to meet the P. D.'s. The debaters chose the subject: "Would the Annexation of Cuba be Beneficial to the United States?" Tom's crowd had choice of sides and took the negative. Then an edict was issued by the faculty enjoining the debate. The superiors held that the young gentlemen were stirring up a hornets' nest—would get the college "in Dutch." Professor Brantley even said the boys would be making asses out of themselves. Tom replied to this (though by no means to Professor Brantley directly) that he would rather make an ass out of himself at 17 than at 50 as Brantley was then

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

doing and as he did every time he undertook to make a speech. But they didn't debate this subject.

In December Tom unwittingly committed an act very displeasing to President Battle and was sent home for several days. Dr. Worsham, with whom the youth had boarded while teaching in Big Warrior District, had moved to Macon and news reached Tom that he was ill with small pox and that his wife was also indisposed. Remembering the many kindnesses of the old gentleman Tom went to see him. President Battle heard of it and sent for Tom. He lectured the youth on the hazard he had taken and the possibility of an epidemic of the disease in the college. He told Tom his motive was commendable, but the boy should go home until it was determined whether he had contracted the disease.

Tom packed his things, crying like a child, and went to Augusta. After being quarantined at home during the Christmas holidays, he returned to Macon.

The boy threw himself into the spring term debates with renewed ardor. It is said there are those who still remember his magnificent defense of Aaron Burr and his speech on the wrongs of the American Indian in old Phi Delta hall. In the former he evinced those aversions to Alexander Hamilton so evident in his later political speeches and editorials. Replying to the picture of Hamilton as a paragon of virtue, drawn by an opponent, Watson painted him as a purveyor of malicious lies about Burr.

"Sir, there is no man in the world who does not value his reputation as second only to his life—as a thing not to be purchased, and when lost never to be regained," declared the youth who was to become one of the most aban-

TO THE GOD OF STORMS

doned triflers with reputations the world ever saw. "Slander waves her wand like the witches of old, and the storm spirits rise."

He rose to heights of eloquence, in this speech, that would do credit to a far more seasoned orator, and he won the debate. In his deliverance on the American aborigines he declared that no more did that relic of lost Roman grandeur, the Coliseum, deserve to be immortalized by the lays of a Byron, and no more did the last rose of summer deserve to be commemorated by the muse of a Moore, than did the passing of the Red Man from sovereignty over American forests and plains merit the sigh of the poet. It would seem that he never lost an opportunity to join in open debate and he was formally chosen on many.

Dr. Battle worked out a scheme by which the mess hall boys were to govern themselves. He said it would inculcate discipline and respect for authority. The idea was interesting so the boys elected officers. John F. Daniel was made president; Ashurst, judge; A. A. Marshall, solicitor-general; Samuel Cooper, secretary; and others were elected. Dr. Battle named the mock state the Mercerian Republic and put it to running. The plan was to hold a trial for any man charged with violation of the by-laws adopted, and to fine him upon conviction, where he refused to pay a fine assessed by the judge on being reported.

Everything went along pretty well until Tom's case came up. Cooper, Lawton and others took the key from the door of Tom's room and Tom "raised Cain" about it. The key was put back. No more was said until Cooper, who was Tom's main dislike, in retaliation for the key incident, reported Tom for creating a disturbance in the

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

hall. A trial was ordered upon Tom's refusal to pay a fine without contest. Reynolds agreed to be his lawyer. The chapel was crowded with students eager to see how the first trial was coming off. Cooper appeared as witness for the prosecution and swore to the disturbance. Counsel for the defense, declaring that under the constitution of the Republic a noise sufficient to create a disturbance had to be loud, boisterous, uproarious, asked him if he would swear the quarreling complained of was such. He swore it was. Tom was beginning to get indignant.

Then the solicitor-general began his speech about the necessity for preserving peace, the sacred principles of justice, and the glorious Mercerian Republic. Marshall was the "brag" orator of the college, and admitted it himself. And he was being freely applauded. Tom was getting hotter and hotter. He determined to throw precedent to the winds and clean the crowd up. When Marshall took his seat Tom rose, though a defendant is not scheduled for a speech. He went to the jury in a fiery torrent of sarcasm. He enumerated witness after witness who had sworn he did not hear the noise, though near the scene of the quarrel, and each time he concluded with: "but Mr. Samuel Cooper says it was a loud, a boisterous, an uproarious noise." Tom's periods, pronounced each time with incisive and accusative distinctness, began to provoke laughter in the jury box. It started with one, then two, then three were laughing until directly the jury and whole house were in an uproar.

Reynolds spoke but the case had already exploded. The prosecution backers got mad, and the court almost broke up in a free-for-all-fight. Tom was cleared, Mar-

TO THE GOD OF STORMS

shall resigned, and Tom was elected solicitor-general; but his case ruined the Mercerian Republic for it ceased to function from that day.

Tom was now becoming noted in college for his quick temper and irascible disposition. Slight in frame, about five feet, five inches in height, with a heavy shock of hair still of reddish hue, he evidenced a nature full of dynamic impulses. That he was more spirit than matter was easy to see. Nor did rule or routine control him. He was given to neglect of his regular studies for the thing he most loved—history. Days found him in the Phi Delta library, even at class time, and nights were more than half spent in more reading by his student's lamp. It was generally known that he was, of a verity, the history scholar of the institution—far ahead of any instructor it boasted. His professors dubbed him a "history hog." He kept up with his regular courses in some degree, but they were side-tracked for his reading in the main.

It was not apprehension concerning his grades that was now Tom's concern, however. It was poverty. One-third of the \$150 he earned teaching a summer school went to paying what his father owed on his high school tuition. He had now used all the remainder in college. An important function was approaching. It was to be a formal banquet and he had not the proper attire. He expected to be called on for a speech. It would never do to miss the opportunity to further exploit those talents with which he was so richly endowed.

Tom's mother spent most of her time studying and planning for her brilliant boy. She knew he depended upon her. Whenever he wrote home for money—as seldom as he could—she got it up for him somehow. She

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

did fancy sewing with the proceeds of which she had kept him going. But it was no easy task; she was often without any ready money. John Watson was now operating a combined restaurant, lodging house and bar-room in Augusta. But John Watson never knew how to make money. The panic of 1873 had forced him to the wall—he had sold out his last acre of land in Thomson and invested the proceeds in the Augusta inn. He had never known how to meet a crisis—how to make a living by his own efforts. Had not the slaves and an overseer formerly attended to everything? What was there for the landowner to do but lead a life of indolent ease? And he had led it, just as many another landowner had done. But when the crash came, shattering the old order, what could he do? In Augusta he was barely making a living through the efforts of himself and Top at the inn. He had no money to send Tom.

Besides, John Watson was a “dead game sport” and played the races for all they were worth. Even here his incapacity manifested itself, for was he not a constant loser? And did he not, on a single race, lose a whole farm before selling out in McDuffie County and moving to Augusta? These things were true; but John Watson was so enamored of the sporting life that he committed even more arrant folly.

One day a smooth talking crook, from nobody knew where, who had cultivated John Watson’s acquaintance at the Augusta races, came to see him at his farm to brag on Dick Turpin. Dick Turpin was none other than John Watson’s young pacer. The horse had wonderful possibilities, but, according to the sleek visitor, John did not fully appreciate them. Wouldn’t John let him take the

TO THE GOD OF STORMS

thoroughbred to Kentucky for training? After some persuasion, John would and did—and saw “neither hide nor hair” of man or beast again.

And so it was now with John Watson. When the mother received Tom's plea for help, at a time, he wrote her, which meant much to him, she was at a loss to know what to do. She had no cash and no immediate prospect of getting any. She sat and thought. Finally Sister Addie, moved by the attitude of the mother, came forward with a plan which meant sacrifice. She had a watch of abundant solid gold, almost as heavy as a small clock, which her mother could sell. Mrs. Watson told her she would just pawn it. She took the watch to a pawnbroker and secured enough to supply Tom's pressing want.

And so it was throughout Tom's sophomore year. One sacrifice after another was made to keep him in college. As the spring term of 1874 was drawing to a close, though, it was seen that the boy would not be able to return another year.

The prospect of not being able to finish college filled Tom with sadness, but he bore up, putting more energy and power than ever into his speeches. His ability in this line had gone abroad, and he was being talked of in Macon as Mercer's brilliant orator. The Sunday School of the Second Baptist Church elected him to represent it with a 5-minute speech at the May Day celebration at the city park May 5th. Many other churches and organizations were represented and it was a big event. Tom spoke so eloquently on poetry that he was the recipient of prize bouquets, and many invitations from the fair maidens of the city to visit them in their homes. The impression he

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

made caused him to be acclaimed, all round, as the best speaker of the day. He thought the Macon girls the most wonderful in the land, an opinion fortified all the more when he had profusely kissed them in the play "Contentment" in which he took part. This day gave him local fame.

On June 20th Tom delivered his last speech in Phi Delta Society, and he so announced it in melancholy strain. Again he was involved in what, in the light of later activities, was an anomalous attitude. He closed the negative side of a debate involving the question of whether political party spirit was beneficial to a nation. The youth who was later to stir up more party spirit and strife than any man the South ever knew, laid down the propositions that party spirit was injurious to a nation because it was unscrupulous in the pursuit of its objects, destructive of unity, and so provocative of turmoil as to undermine national strength. He pointed to the noble Robert Emmett, condemned to die for no other cause than that he loved Ireland too well, as an example of what political strife could do to him who engaged therein. He ended a lengthy and impassioned deliverance by reminding those who heard him that out in the arena of public life they would meet again, "and in this last speech that I shall ever make to you in this Hall, I appeal to you to be true to yourselves, your principles and your country. And when the storm comes, for come it will and come it must, when the clouds envelop our political horizon, when the rocks of destruction seem yawning beneath us;—then when the demagogue is calling for war, when the passions of the multitude are calling for war, let us gather around the altar of our liberties, let us unite hand in hand, and let us

TO THE GOD OF STORMS

swear by the great God above us to stand by our flag! And then let us united live or united die. Do this, gentlemen, it is your only hope of safety. Do this and tranquility will once more come among us. Do this, and when in the far ages of the future the white winged ships of every nation fly over the seas of the globe, each mast will unfurl to the breeze a proud banner, but the proudest of all will be the Stars and Stripes of America. But, gentlemen, if bad counsels prevail; if agitators accomplish disunion; if ruthless hands destroy us as a confederacy, do not forsake the Constitution.] Do your duty though the heavens fall. Don't give up the good old ship of state. Rally yet closer around her. Launch her out upon the seething waters; and

“ ‘Nail to the mast her holy flag,
Set every threadbare sail;
And give her to the god of storms,
The lightning and the gale.’ ”

CHAPTER XI

THE COMPLEX OF LIFE

WHEN Tom left Mercer in June 1874 he was gloomy. Just a boy, he was averse to facing the world without completing his education. There was nothing else for him to do but go home, look for work and make the most of the situation. He went to Screven County for a visit with his very dear friend, Glenn Thompson, remaining long enough to meet and admire Glenn's sister, Laura, and proceeded to Augusta. Here he applied for jobs in stores and for schools, but could get no work. He was willing to do most anything to make enough money to start him in his junior year at Mercer.

Why didn't Tom think of Hon. Alexander H. Stephens, noted benefactor of poor boys seeking an education? Why, indeed? for the great Southern statesman was well known to Tom. The lad had visited the Sage of Liberty Hall at his Crawfordville home not far from Thomson, and it was virtually a certainty the necessary funds would have been obtained. The former Vice-President of the Confederacy had been a hero in Tom's eyes since his school days in Thomson when he saw Alex. Stephens for the first time. Somehow he did not think of him now.

With \$6.50 in his pocket, derived from auctioning off some very dear old books his father had given him years before, Tom set out to make his own way in the world on September 24, 1874. He was just 18 years old. He

THE COMPLEX OF LIFE

went down to Lawtonville, where the Middle Association of Baptists was in session. Finding that none of those attending the convention could point him any chance, Tom, with his friend, William Brinson, struck across the country, some eighteen miles, back to Screven County. When his scanty capital was about gone he decided to work up another school. With Glenn Thompson, he went the rounds of the houses, and finally succeeded in making up a school which he opened at Little Horse Creek Church on the first Monday in October.

Tom boarded with James G. Thompson, father of Glenn. He was most pleasantly situated with the Thompsons, welcoming the chance to be near Glenn and his brother, George, while in a new field. And there was even a stronger attachment. It was the charming Laura. Not an unusually attractive girl at first sight, she possessed those qualities which grew in one's favor as the days went by. Her face, in its manifold changes of expression, revealed a dramatic inner being which was irresistible to Tom. He came to love her and told her so. The suit met with favor in her eyes, and they became engaged.

Tom and Theodosia had "broken up" during his stay at the Thompsons. An estrangement had begun during the preceding vacation. Theo, as he called her, seemed never to know whether she was really in love with him, and while coming under the spell of Laura, his regard for Theo needed much bolstering up which she seems not to have given. The break came in letters. He brooded for a time, writing sad prose poems in neighboring forests, but finally shook the feeling off and centered his affection upon Laura.

In November a committee from a Temperance Society

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

at Little Horse Creek Church invited Tom to address their next gathering. He accepted the honor. It would be his first public address where he alone made up the program. Tom welcomed an opportunity to strike at the demon rum which he inveighed against as the greatest enemy of the home, church and the school. By no means a fanatic on the subject of drinking, he struck at the licensed saloon then, as he did afterwards, with all the force at his command.

It would appear from this speech that Tom's mind was already running in that channel it pursued some twenty years later when he created an uproar in Congress by denouncing drunken members.

"Yes, alcohol!" he said. "Our preachers drink it; our legislators drink it; our Presidents drink it. What shall we do? Shall we tamely submit to the government of inebriates or shall we send sober men to take the reins? . . . I say, no! And I would meet any man on this subject hand to hand and fight it out on this very line. Our representatives spend the night in disgraceful debauch, in shameful dissipation, and in the morning while the fumes of liquor are still upon their bodies, minds and souls, they reel to the Capitol to make laws which are to be binding upon your most sacred interests! Gentlemen, is it fair?"

Tom went on to say that the existing state law was a disgrace for "any man may come within twenty feet of your door and set up his infernal grogery." He aroused his hearers to impending danger, and they were deeply moved. He was, of a verity, making his first political speech, and it is quite deducible that he so intended it. This youth had championed the cause of this society with

THE COMPLEX OF LIFE

unstinted zeal, and you may be sure they didn't forget it.

James Thompson saw the forensic powers of Tom and told him he ought to be a lawyer. He did even more. Returning from a trip to Savannah, he brought Tom a copy of Blackstone's *Commentaries on the English Common Law*, and nothing could have made him happier. By a fat lightwood-knot fire every night, sprawled out upon the floor, Tom pored over the pages of Blackstone, eagerly absorbing his first legal principles. And with this study, revealing how harsh the law had always been with the poor tenant, a virtual serf, was born Tom's burning passion for the common people—his divine purpose to lead them up and out to a better day.

Tom went back to Augusta for the Christmas holidays, closing his school at Little Horse Creek Church. The yearning for the law was growing stronger, almost irresistible, for in it he now felt was his real opportunity. But how was he to begin? He had no money with which to buy books, and there must be a period of hard study before he could pass an examination. Moping around home in January 1875 despair seized him. It grew worse and caused his mother grave alarm. The youth talked of running away to Texas. He would risk his fortune in a far field—there was nothing at home for him.

Mrs. Watson felt a crisis at hand. She knew if something were not done soon to put Tom on the road to new achievements, it would be impossible to say what he would do. And oh, how she hated for him to go far away—and to the West where border ways were still rife and where her boy might take the downward track. She loved him too well to stand by and see his future ruined.

Tom could devise no plan by which he might secure

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

the necessary legal education for admission to the bar. He could only find relief in poetic composition. He revised his "John Howard Payne" and sent it to the *Sandersville Herald and Georgian*, in which it soon appeared, causing wide comment.

Yet this restless waiting—for nothing as he fully believed—was making him desperate. He lay out on the banks of the Savannah River and plotted escape to Texas. And it was now by this murky stream that he composed lines called "Despair," written to the meter of Poe's stately dirge, "Ulalume."

Mrs. Watson was still thinking what to do. She finally remembered that in Judge W. R. McLaws, prominent Augusta lawyer, she had a true friend. She would go to him and see if he would help. With the belief that she was setting out upon a mission that was to mean the turning point in Tom's life, she went with a prayer upon her lips. It was to mean the keeping or the breaking of the home ties she knew Tom so much needed.

She put her case before Judge McLaws with all the earnestness of her being. The learned lawyer was moved by this appeal, more solemn in its finality than any he had ever made to court or jury. And he was moved to help. He told the mother he would help her boy to become a lawyer. Let Tom come into his office and his library and instruction were at his command as long as he wished.

With face beaming in her triumph, prouder than any general, Mrs. Ann Eliza Watson went back to Tom with a veritable promise of success in life. It would be impossible to express here the joy that attended the lifting of the load of despair from the youth's mind, or his boundless

THE COMPLEX OF LIFE

gratitude to his mother. He entered the offices of Judge McLaws and in a few months had devoured enough law to make him confident he could go before a committee of lawyers and show himself fit for the bar.

Tom did not wait for the next term of the Superior Court, when he was to be examined. He went back to Screven County to raise a little more money teaching school. Securing board with Ed Gross, Jr., he opened a school at Double Heads Church. Shortly afterwards he delivered another temperance speech at Little Horse Creek Church. He and Glenn Thompson harangued the huge crowd in the evening, following a day featured by a big picnic spread.

Tom became enamored in more or less frivolous vein of one of his oldest pupils. He indited verses to her during school hours. When his three months' school at Double Heads Church closed, Tom had saved \$80 and endeared himself in the hearts of more rural youth. The boys were sad, the girls cried, and one gave him a very sweet kiss.

Tom now went back to Augusta to apply for admission to the bar. When Richmond Superior Court convened in the fall of 1875 Judge McLaws presented Tom's petition to the Honorable William Gibson, judge thereof. His Honor appointed to examine the applicant a committee of lawyers composed of Judge McLaws, Solicitor-General Davenport Jackson, John S. Davidson and Thomas H. Gibson. The youth, just 19, was declared competent and admitted with the commendation of presiding judge and appropriate notices in the Augusta press.

Back to Screven County the young barrister went, to hang out his shingle. He attended Superior Court at Sylvania, and made his first fee by drawing and presenting

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

a petition of Thomas G. Wilson for an order to sell a trust estate. He got the order, and his first fee of \$10. He then went to Marland's Mill and hung out his shingle, renewing his boarding place at the home of Ed Gross, Jr., after a month. At first he had a hard time drawing papers as his legal education had not included this important branch of law, and form books were few and hard to find. Improving by digging things out for himself, Tom made \$25 as one fee and his business was doing well.

In March 1876, however, law business in Tom's vicinity came to a halt. The dull season was now on. His expenses were now \$20 per month, too outrageous to think of. He sold a horse he had bought from his friend, Sam Howard, to haul him to court. He got so hard up for cash that he had to trade a silver cup which had belonged to his grandfather for a necessary article of clothing. The pity of it was that the cup was worth ten times as much as the cheap cotton garment he received for it—but he simply had to have the garment.

Tom was forced to make a living, so he decided to combine law with school teaching. He took a small private school until June; then moved over to Attorney Homer Cail's vicinity and opened a public school, Pine Grove Academy, boarding with Cail, an elderly gentleman. It was while going to and from this school that he composed his pastoral commemorating the excellencies of "The Farm," published later in *The Georgia Grange*.

While teaching his last private school he had written his "Give Me a Kiss," published in the *Herald and Georgian*, and "Carpe Diem," a poem struck off during school hours.

It is presumed that he renewed his acquaintance with

THE COMPLEX OF LIFE

his coquettish pupil, for in June he wrote at her request, as words to fit a tune she was constantly humming, these lines:

THE TRYSTING PLACE

She said at twilight she would meet me
Here within this mossy nook,
When the lilies were reposing
On the bosom of the brook.

Yet she comes not though the sunbeams
Fade along the glowing West
And the violet is sleeping
With the dewdrop on its breast.

So I wait here in the forest
Where the tiny fairies dwell,
Where the silver streamlet ripples
Softly through the shady dell.

Hark I hear a distant footstep
Gliding forward light and free;
Can it be my bonnie lassie
Coming swiftly o'er the lea?

Yes I see her mantle glisten
In the young moon's mellow beam
And I gladly spring to meet her
At the margin of the stream.

I press her to my bosom closely,
Kissing oft her saucy lips,
Yielding me a pleasure sweeter
Than the nectar Cupid sips.

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

Then I lead her blushing coyly
Like a bride into the nook,
Where we're happy while the lilies
Sleep upon the gurgling brook.

And it was during the same month that Tom penned:

THE TORN LOVE LETTER

As I came from my school one beautiful eve
By the path which winds through the bay,
I came to the brink of the musical brook
And paused for a while on my way.

And there as I loitered I happened to see,
Besmeared by the dust and the rain,
A letter all torn into fragments and shreds
Where perhaps for a month it had lain.

I knelt to the ground by the side of the brook
And gathered the remnants with care
And thought, as I brushed the splotches away,
How on earth it came to be there.

I see it commences "My dear little Friend"
And "Jennie's" the maiden addressed
And through the whole letter with titles of love
That name is fondly caressed.

Perhaps 'twas a coquette who loved him awhile
Then tossed him aside with a frown
And, reading his letter by the brook one day,
Threw it carelessly, cruelly down.

And here it has lain, beat down to the earth
Like a thing that was loathsome or mean,



THE COMPLEX OF LIFE

Yet it breathes of a love as radiantly pure
As the moonbeams' silvery sheen.

So it is with the world which loves us awhile
And fondles our high flown pride;
Then caught by an eye more brilliant than ours
Relentlessly throws us aside.

And travelers oft on the highway of life
Will pause while journeying by
And viewing the wrecks of hope and resolve
Turn away with sympathy to sigh.

Tom had broken off with Laura. On a visit to Augusta he decided his feeling for her was not as deep as he had supposed. Returning to Screven County he deliberately gave her cause to break with him. She brought his letters to him, and returning hers without a word, he watched her drive away with her brother and never saw her again. She wrote to him to come back to her, but he felt he could not do it.

Besides, his poem "My Spirit's Bride" had now caused a renewal of good terms between him and Theo. He had written the lines for her, and upon their estrangement she had refused to return them. This led to a reconciliation for Tom began to feel he had wrongly doubted her love.

Probably the freshest and best of his Screven County impromptu verses was his

JEANETTE

Our summer days of joy, Jeanette,
Have sunk into the past, and yet
I will not, cannot quite forget
How sweet they were to me.

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

For wheresoe'er my footsteps lead
They cannot distance mem'ry's speed,
The past is still a flowery mead
Fragrant with thoughts of thee.

Thy cheeks were tipped with rosy health
Where blushes crept by charming stealth
And on thy shoulders slept a wealth
Of waving auburn hair.
Thine eyes were soft as summer's night
And beamed with Love's celestial light
And every thought, gay winged and bright,
Was clearly mirrored there.

And oft when hushed were day's alarms
I sipped the fragrance of thy charms
And lay within thy circling arms,
Those soft white arms of thine.
Oh, who my fiery youth can blame
If I when wrapped by passion's flame
Seized every joy that love can claim
And called the sweetest mine.

Sweet, fair Jeanette, those days have fled,
Have faded to the realms of dead,
Crushed now between Fate's iron tread
They live no longer here.
But we will keep them ever green
To light the Past with silver sheen,
Where love's bright stars are ever seen
And mem'ry drops a tear.

But the poem which brought Tom most fame as a verse
maker was the following, composed on horse-back in

THE COMPLEX OF LIFE

September 1876, reminding one very much of the burden of the celebrated Omar Khayyam. They were published in the *Augusta Constitutionalist*.

CARPE DIEM

Pluck them, dearest, pluck the roses,
 In their blushing robes arrayed
Where the idle breeze reposes,
 Where the dew drops' home is made.
For, by winter's chill embraces,
 Soon their beauties will be found;
And their pale and withered faces
 Strew the cold and cheerless ground.

Cull them, dearest, cull the flowers;
 Twine them in thy glossy hair;
Let them grace thy joyous hours
 With their fragrance rich and rare.
For the flower quickly fadeth,
 And affliction's gloomy tread
All too soon the features shadeth,
 And with silver crowns the head.

Sip them, dearest, sip the pleasures,
 While they now around thee grow;
Ere they waste their swimming treasures;
 Ere they lose their summer glow.
From thine eye will wane its brightness,
 And thy blooming cheek will pale;
From thy heart depart its lightness,
 And each source of pleasure fail.

Life is floating onward ever,
 Like a shadow o'er the plain;

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

And the bliss it leaves, ah never!
We may hope to see again.
Then when joy about thee hovers,
And no sorrows with thee dwell;
While young Life and Hope are lovers,
Carpe diem, dearest Belle!

On August 25, 1876, Tom closed his fifth and last school—the three-months session at Pine Grove Academy. He now began keeping bachelors' hall with Glenn Thompson. Tom dreamed of success at the bar while Glenn, a young minister, studied his sermons. At night Tom tried to drive off morbid feelings with his fiddle. His music lessons under Miss Belle Hanson had finally resulted in his developing a certain skill with this instrument. But he was now disgusted with Screven County. For a while he thought of teaching school again, and prospected for one, but it would be the next year before he could open it. Besides, Tom had acquired a reputation as a rake in Screven County. He knew this would never do for a penniless lawyer in that day and time. He was looked at askance by "nice people" and his influential friends were growing colder. This added to his gloomy reveries.

Lying under the pines by day and fiddling by night he racked his brain to decide what he had better do. A temperance lectureship was within his reach, but before he could take it, it was abolished.

Then Tom remembered his old school teacher, Robert H. Pearce, at Thomson. He wrote to him, asking if he would stake him for a year's board while he got on his feet as a lawyer. To his great joy, Professor Pearce wrote he would be glad to do it. So now it was back to Thomson with high hopes for a new deal from fate.

CHAPTER XII

GRATITUDE WITH OPPORTUNITY

WHEN Tom returned to Thomson in November 1876 it was to win fame as a lawyer. Little opportunity had offered itself in Screven County and his legal work there had amounted virtually to nothing. He had abandoned for good the original form of his name, "E. Thomas," for "Thomas E.," while in Screven County, and, styled as the latter, country weekly newspapers had exploited him considerably ere he re-entered the scene of his boyhood labors.

Taking up his abode in the home of Professor Pearce, now Clerk of the Superior Court of McDuffie County, Tom's vision of the future took on a brighter tone. He now believed he had a chance, and his big hope was to whip his life-long enemy, poverty. He hated poverty. He knew it for the stumbling block in the path of many a man of genius, of many an ambitious youth. Instead of being his undoing, as it had been that of many a young man, money would be his salvation, Tom knew. To him money meant possibility, not destruction.

He had none. The clerk in Augusta had credited him for the fee on his license to practice and now his very living was extended him by the good Professor Pearce on credit. To help the young man further, his benefactor permitted Tom to do part of the work in the clerk's office. When Tom recorded a deed, mortgage or other paper, he was

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

allowed to keep the fee collected. In this way he managed to keep going while waiting for clients.

Using every faculty he possessed by which to advance, Tom also did newspaper work. He welcomed the opportunity offered by J. E. White, publisher of the weekly *McDuffie Journal*, to share in its editorship. Tom got out a column headed "Up-Town Department," howbeit there was no logic in the name, for Thomson was as much down town as up town. But when Editor White went on an extended trip to Florida, Tom had entire charge of the paper. He made good the chance to legitimately advertise himself—as a quite diverting writer, however, not as a practicing attorney. Indirectly, of course, the journalism aided the law.

It is by no means out of place here to record what was now the crux of his delving into French history. *The McDuffie Journal* published two poems "By Thomas E. Watson" which were copied in many papers throughout the State. They celebrated the genuine romance of Napoleon Bonaparte and Josephine Beauharnais which outlived all other romances in the lives of both. These verses reveal the deep and abiding passion the young lawyer had for the love story which was, to him, the most exalted in all history. First came

JOSEPHINE'S DEVOTION

Sire, my love, the heart of woman
Ne'er forgets the love it bore,
Till the streamlet of Existence
Sings its mystic song no more.
Mem'ry guards the deep affection
When the hopes it reared have fled;

GRATITUDE WITH OPPORTUNITY

And, though Sorrow dwells above it,
Soft and holy is its tread.

Sire, my love, thy glory fadeth,
And thy lot is cheerless now,
For the diadem of power
Withers from thy marble brow.
Round thee sigh the winds of winter;
O'er thee hangs Fate's ebon cloud,
In the dust thy hopes lie scattered,
And thy head with grief is bowed.

Sire, my love, though foemen thicken,
And thy friends betray, forsake;
Though thy trials, like mad billows
On thy life's great seashore break;
Still, oh still, my heart's devotion
Would more firm, unswerving be,
And would proudly face each peril,
Since it lives, love, but for thee.

Sire, my love, thy brow is furrowed—
Let me drive away its care;
And thy cheeks are pale and haggard—
Let me call the roses there.
Be not, be not spirit-broken
By the swift and cruel blow;
Yet, ah, yet we may be happy
If thy heart but will it so.

Sire, my love, where ocean wavelets
Kiss the sands of Elba's Isle,
We will find a peaceful haven—
There upon us joy will smile.
True, thy noonday's gorgeous splendor
Evening's shadow sadly mars;

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

Still, though twilight creep upon thee,
'Twill be twilight lit with stars.

And then the merited

NAPOLEON'S TRIBUTE

Josephine, the red banner of conquest
Led me on to the summits of Fame,
Till the monarchs of earth and their legions
Grew pale at the sound of my name.
The peasant, the priest and the noble
Bowed alike to the weight of my sway;
Proud sceptres were laid at my footstool—
I gave the light baubles away.

Josephine, my power is ebbing;
My towering visions are vain;
The nations are banded against me;
The days of my destiny wane.
The minions I pampered have left me,
Like leaves from the perishing tree—
Josephine, in the gloom of this hour
To none can I trust but to thee.

Josephine, in the time of my splendor,
When I bent to the mandate of pride,
My love was dethroned by ambition,
And I put thee away from my side.
Even then thy affectionate bosom
No feeling but love ever knew;
Now the woman I wedded neglects me,
Whilst thou, the forsaken, art true.

Josephine, in my life not an hour
Have I spent from anxiety free;

GRATITUDE WITH OPPORTUNITY

And the only few moments of pleasure
I enjoyed I owe unto thee.
My empire pales, but another
Is mine that can never depart;
War never can shatter my kingdom
In the pure sunny land of thy heart.

And, indeed, not foreign to the turmoil of his own spirit was the theme of these lines. The 20-year-old barrister, locking horns at every opportunity with lawyers twice his age and experience, was now passing through one of the big crises of his life. We shall deal with this at the proper place.

In the third week in March 1877 Tom made his first argument to a jury. It was in McDuffie Superior Court, Judge William Gibson presiding, and the case was that of *The State v. Neander Edwards*, simple larceny. The court room was crowded with Tom's old schoolmates, teachers and boyhood friends. And there, too, was Judge McLaws, come down from Augusta to handle cases of his own. He waited to hear the first jury speech of his protégé. Tom was for the prosecution, having been associated in the case with Solicitor-General Salem Dutcher. The defendant was convicted, as was the defendant in the second case in which Tom participated, a burglary case against a negro woman, in which he was joined with the Solicitor-General.

There was a decided drop in law business after court adjourned and Tom used this time reading law out of books bought on credit, and working on the newspaper.

In August, in the McDuffie County Court, Judge Richard Neal presiding, there came up for trial the celebrated bull shooting case brought by A. J. Story (father

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

of Theodosia) against one Petit. Tom, representing Mr. Story, took out a warrant for Petit, charging malicious mischief in the shooting of a bull owned by Story.

✓The court room was packed with people from every part of the county—for was not this the famous bull believed to carry twenty-four pounds of shot in his belly as a result of having been fired upon by practically every farmer in the neighborhood in retaliation for the depredations committed by the fiery "critter" in tearing down fences and trampling down crops? Why should Petit be singled out for prosecution in the death of a terror to the community which had been shot so many times that W. D. Tutt, counsel for Petit, called him "the ordnance train of the neighborhood?"

Evidence was even offered to the effect that the bull had been shot by one man with a keg of 10-penny nails after the enraged farmer had despaired of making any impression on him with ordinary buckshot. And the defense even had the audacity to bring out from another witness that the cause of the bull's death was the irregularity with which he was lately being shot—that he fattened on bullets.

So it was no use. Petit was cleared in a case in which it was impossible to say who had fired the fatal shot. This was the first case Tom had handled alone before a jury.

His second, a prosecution in the County Court for adultery in which he was employed to represent the prosecution, with H. C. Roney for the defense, resulted in a mistrial.

Tom's record was most encouraging for a youth not yet grown against seasoned lawyers, and in a few months he had earned fees totalling \$101.70. He was beginning his legal career almost on the same spot where he attended

GRATITUDE WITH OPPORTUNITY

his first public school. The McDuffie courthouse was on the same square with the old Steed schoolhouse.

When Tom was teaching his first school he wrote his father that it was his resolve to see that his parents did not suffer in their old age. He promised that if his father could just help him with his education, he would provide for him and Mrs. Watson when they could not do so for themselves. Tom wrote that he not only felt it his duty to do this, but would rejoice in the privilege of doing it.

The letter was written with full appreciation of the circumstances of John Watson's family in Augusta, and with the knowledge that the time was not far off when its promise would need to be carried out. That time was now. Every visit Tom made to Augusta revealed anew the bad circumstances into which the family was drifting. Living in a shanty on the edge of a marsh, both parents and children were constantly suffering from chills and fever. And John Watson seemed overwhelmed with a veritable stupor. He had lost his hold on life and seemed to care for nothing.

Tom could not bear to see his sisters, Addie, Belle and Julia, brought up longer in such surroundings. Top was already back in Thomson, but the younger brothers, Julian and Forrest, were growing up in the shadow of the saloon as well as in the shadow of want.

In his first year at the bar in Thomson, Tom's fees amounted to \$212. While this would be no considerable sum today it amounted to a good deal in the '70's, and he felt justified in assuming debt. He determined to buy back the old Sweetwater place on the Augusta road and move his family back to McDuffie County. Striking a

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

trade with James S. Shields, now the owner, Tom bought the plantation of 700 acres for \$3000 on credit. The terms were \$500 to be paid in December of that year (1877), \$500 the next June, \$500 in December 1878, and \$500 a year for three years. He rented all but 200 acres close to the old home to tenants, bought a team and wagon and started a hand to hauling wood to Thomson.

When he notified his folks of what he had done their joy knew no bounds. Brother Tom had bought back the old home place—the best one of the three they had known—and was going to move the family back, back to the surroundings they loved so well and around which clung so many of childhood's fondest memories. In November they moved back and Brother Tom moved out there with them. He would give up his boarding place in town, trudge to his office and back each day with his dinner in a tin bucket, though it meant a 6-mile walk, to be back in the country with the folks.

The Watsons returned in two lots, some remaining in Augusta an extra day to get everything shipped. First came Belle, Julia and Julian. Tom met their train and went to the old home with them. No furniture had arrived, save a small quantity of bedding, and the four slept the first night on the floor.

And it was a good thing Brother Tom was there, because "hants" were on the war path that night. Considerably older than any of the children with him, he was regarded as ample protector even from ghosts.

Little Julia went out on the back porch for some water. She heard a low, but distinct and persistent groaning noise. She called Belle, who went and listened. Julian followed. The three had never heard such a mournful

GRATITUDE WITH OPPORTUNITY

sound before. They knew well the noise of the owl and of every noise producing creature on the farm. They had never heard this noise before. No further than the half opened door would they go. The groaning continued and sent the cold chills up and down their backs. None was too worldly wise to discredit "hants" and each knew this was a good place for them. There would be no water drinking that night if left to them.

"Oh, Brother Tom knows what that is" said Belle, leading the other two back into the dark house. The three went to Tom and told him of the unearthly noise on the back porch. Tom could not imagine what it could be. He went out on the back porch and listened. The youngsters were right behind him. For a considerable time nothing more was heard. But instead of saying "Oh, it's nothing; go on back to bed," Tom did the only thing that would take away the children's fright. He waited to show them what the noise was. They listened. There it was again. O-o-o-o-o, in sonorous, low and protracted moaning, it came. Tom couldn't, for the life of him, imagine what the sound was. And he didn't blame the children for being afraid. It ceased; then it began again, louder and more woe-begone. Tom stepped over to the part of the porch from which the noise seemed to come, stooped down beside a clay jug and put his hand over its open mouth. The noise stopped. Without saying a word, he took the jug back to the door, showed it to the children, and removed his hand. With the next breeze the noise re-issued from the jug and the children broke into loud laughter. They went back to bed and went to sleep—because Brother Tom was master even of spirits.

The next day came father, mother, Addie and Forrest.

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

All put their shoulders to the wheel to make the place go. They put new life into it, and John Watson brightened up as with a new world of possibilities before him. And Tom had now for one of his tenants old Abe Watson, hoary headed negro who had been his grandfather's foreman. Since freedom Uncle Abe had worked hard, but had made nothing. Tom honored him more than some lazy white men he knew because the old darky would tackle work even in old age. And with Tom as his boss he had that year the first Christmas money he had known since he was a slave.

In January 1878 Tom saw to it that his youngest sisters were sent to school. Belle entered the public school in Thomson taught by Rev. J. W. Ellington, pastor of the Baptist church. Julia, just beginning, was placed under the tender care of Miss Georgia Durham, who taught a private school for small children upstairs in the home of Dr. George W. Durham, prominent Thomson physician.

Sometimes Julia would go to school in the conveyance which took Belle, but not infrequently she was taken up behind Brother Tom on his horse. On the latter occasions, Tom would gallop up to the Durhams' and slide little Julia down beside Miss Georgia, who was nearly always at the open gate. Dr. Durham's wife would often say, when she heard the hoofs of Tom's horse: "There comes Julia with her bonnet a-flopping."

Miss Georgia! How everybody loved her. Sweet, retiring, always kind, beloved for her gracious ways. Typical Southern queen of 20 years, she was beautiful, and breathed the spirit of spring and the gorgeous sunshine. Lover of all God's creatures, she yearned to teach

GRATITUDE WITH OPPORTUNITY

little children a love of nature as well as the lessons in their books. Of a deeply spiritual nature, she possessed a hidden influence and commanded that sway born of a rich inner life—that wins through patience and love.

Tom loved to bring Julia to the Durhams'. Somehow the sweet smile of Miss Georgia lifted his heavy spirit—made him forget the poverty that dogged his ambition. The intensity of his spirit, its uncontrollable urge, spurring him on when there was no way to go, leaving him rest neither by day nor night, worked morbidness in reaction. Now just entered upon the first year of his majority, the passion for fame—fame now, without delay—was consuming him. With opportunity seemingly so far behind ambition, Tom was like the eagle casting himself against the bars of his cage. He longed to soar—far above the heads of his fellows, setting the pace for the rest of his world.

But each time the sunshine of Miss Georgia's smile brought him back to earth—back to the wondrous beauty and the unbounded possibilities of the world around him. It made him anew; it gave him full measure of new faith.

CHAPTER XIII

FATE GOES FAR AFIELD

“ON a night in the early part of the year 1861, a closed carriage sped along the shell road from Savannah to Thunderbolt. It turned to the right, entering the flats which sweep on to the waters of the ocean. It stopped before a small house, in which a light was burning, and a man, wrapped in a cloak, got out and walked toward the door of the cottage, bearing in his arms a sleeping child. Once inside the house, he closed the door, as though the place were his, and he laid the child softly upon a clean cot which apparently had been ready for it. As he did so, the fleecy, knitted shawl which had covered its head fell away. The face was that of a little girl, some four years old.

“‘Rose,’ called the man; and in response there came into the room from some building in the rear an old negro woman, a motherly looking old soul, dressed much better than the average negro woman, and having the appearance of a favored servant of the richest people.

“‘Rose, here is my little girl whom you are to keep for me until I can send her North. As you know, her mother is dead. I have no relative anywhere in the South. My folks are all in the North, and I can’t fight against them. I must get away from here and must go tonight. I’ve already waited too long and am in danger of not getting through the lines.’

FATE GOES FAR AFIELD

"He then hurriedly arranged all details with the woman, giving her money and instructions.

" 'But s'pose Miss Annie's folks claim de chile?' asked the negro woman.

" 'That is the very reason I bring her here. They must not know where she is. I've waited too long, had some money matters that had to be attended to, and now I cannot take the child with me. If I leave her with her mother's people, they will never let her come North.'

" 'Po' Miss Annie,' said the woman, drawing a long breath, 'her folks lak ter went wil' when she fell in love wid a Yankee.'

" 'Damned prejudice,' snarled the man. 'Because I stood for my own convictions and told them what fools the Southern people were making of themselves, they openly hated me and almost cast off Annie. Between love for her own people and love for me the poor child's heart was broken, I think.'

"He stood before the fire, looking down into the blaze, and he had the look of a man who had suffered. In size he was not above a medium, was well built, had a face in no way remarkable for looks, either good or bad, but he had the appearance of a gentleman and his dress was that of a prosperous banker or merchant.

"Studying his clean-cut, regular and self-possessed features, you would have come to the conclusion that here was a man who was, first of all, a business man—one who was not given to sentimental softness or weakness, one who might tread roughly over all things which stood between him and business.

" 'Rose,' he resumed at length, 'you know what I have done for you and Abram. You and your husband both

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

express yourselves as grateful to me. In your house my child can be concealed from those high-headed kinspeople of Annie's until I can manage to send for her. I trust her to you and to Abram. She knows you both love her. Call him in here.'

"Rose's husband had been nodding by the kitchen fire, but he now entered the house, bent his grey head to the white man, and glanced toward the cot.

"'Dat little Missie?' he said, though he knew well enough who it was.

"'Yes, Abram, that's Missie. You and Rose must take charge of her for a short while, and protect her as you would your own. Keep her out of the sight of visitors to Thunderbolt, let none of those Savannah people know where she is, and when I send for her let her come at once.'

"He went to the still sleeping child, gazed at her affectionately a moment, bent over and kissed her—very, very softly and tenderly. Then he told the aged couple good-bye, with final words of instruction, and was driven away.

"A little white girl—dainty, beautiful, elegantly dressed—left at a negro house for the negroes to take care of, for an uncertain length of time and during the tumult of war! An unusual proceeding, even for a Northern man. Old Abram and his wife, Rose, sat by the fire, long after their visitor had gone on his way back to Savannah, gravely talking the thing over. Said Abram:

"'Pity Major Grimes' folks hate Marse George so bad—his little gal ought ter be wid de Major in de city, not hid out heah in er nigger house.'

"'Yas, 'tis er pity,' Rose agreed, 'but we mus' do de bes' we kin, Miss Annie wuz good ter me and Mist' Parker

FATE GOES FAR AFIELD

loant you de money ter buy dis house, an' he ain' never come down on yer fur it, lak some would er done.'

" 'I know dat,' said Abram. 'Dat whut make me promise him ter take keer er de chile when he fus axed me.'

" 'Den again he so free wid his money,' suggested Rose. 'And den again de little Missie allus been er pet wid us since de fus time we seen Marse George bring her down to Thunderbolt.'

" 'Nicest lil white gal I seen yit,' Abram rejoined cordially. 'Got no mean ways, an' no sass. Never hearn her sass nobody, ner pout, ner make faces.'

" 'Nice little gal,' said Rose softly, glancing at the cot, 'an' if I had er been her daddy I'd er tuk her home or died.'

" 'Shet yo' mouf, Rose! Yer don' know whut yer talkin' 'bout now. Dat white man got ter run de blockade, an' how he goin' do it an' tote er lil gal chile all de time?'

" 'Whut dat I hear?' said Rose, listening.

" 'Whut?' echoed Abram, on the alert.

" 'The note, the shivering cry of the screech owl rose on the night from some tree close to the house.'

" 'Turn yo' shoe upside down an' put de shubble in de fire,' commanded Rose hastily.

" 'Abram lost no time in doing what he was bidden—yet the owl shivered most uncomfortably.'

" 'Git up an' git some salt an' throw in de fire!' Rose commanded further, and Abram stumbled to the kitchen, got the salt, and flung some on the fire.

" 'The owl was heard no more.'

" 'Bless God!' sighed Rose, deeply relieved.

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

"And so let us leave them. I wonder if the stars looking down through the hurrying clouds that night saw a sight more pathetic than this in all the troubled South. The negro cottage near the ocean, the trusted old couple chosen for a strange trust, the sweet-faced child asleep on the cot—motherless, and its father speeding away through the night to the far North.

"Daintier little hands than those never clasped about a parent's neck; rosier, sweeter lips no mother ever kissed. When those tender, violet eyes were closing in slumber they rested upon the face of a devoted father. They were never to look upon him again."

Thus reads a fragment among the papers of Thomas E. Watson. It is unfortunate that a fragment is all that he left of a story which was the most sacred of all those in the checkered web of his life. It forms a part of his contemplated novel, "Endurin' of the War," that progressed not much further than what is quoted, which is all that bears upon the present episode.

It was during the Civil War that George W. Durham, a young surgeon in the Confederate Army stationed in the vicinity of Savannah, was wont to see a lovely little girl, with golden curls and sad, trustful blue eyes, at the home of an old negro couple. The plight of the beautiful child appealed to his generous heart. She could not be left so. She must be cared for and reared by white people. Though the best of care was being taken of her—as her clothes and appearance bespoke—it was a fearful thing for a white child to be so situated, and the surgeon determined to take her away. He knew this sweet child would be loved by his childless wife.

FATE GOES FAR AFIELD

He approached the old negroes, explained his purpose, stressing the child's welfare, and she was freely given in his charge. The old darky and his wife, who had been slaves all their lives, told him they were glad for the little girl to have a home with white people. They had not had her long, and knew that soon white people would discover her and take her from them, and they believed the army man a safe person to have the child. They told him of their devotion to the child, but how they knew well enough she must not grow up among negroes.

Just what account the old darkies could give of the little girl, it is not possible now to say. The most painstaking investigation has revealed that the man referred to in the fragment above as "Parker," and as having turned the child over to the negro pair, is believed by persons who claim a meager knowledge of the story to have been one Parsons, a Northern man. The "Major Grimes" is believed to have been one Lewis, the father of "Miss Annie," said to have been the real Christian name of the mother.

It is told that, upon the outbreak of war, a fierce hatred came between Lewis and Parsons, due to their opposed sympathies, though Parsons was the husband of Annie Lewis. The Southern father-in-law drove the Yankee son-in-law out of his house.

It is further told that, upon the untimely death of the mother, of a broken heart, Parsons, by stealth, took the child from the Lewis home and left her in the care of the negro couple, slaves of the Lewises who loved Miss Annie devotedly, to bide such time as he could take her back North with him. The fragment would indicate that this view was held by Mr. Watson.

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

At any rate at some period prior to the close of the war, Dr. George W. Durham came to his father's home in Clarke County (North Georgia), bringing the child. From that day she was Georgia Durham, her Christian name, according to report, being the one the mother had given her.

This child of a most untoward fate knew little, if anything, of her mother, who, the old slaves said, broke her heart over the cruel lot imposed upon her baby by the hatred born of war. The grandchild of a rich Southern planter, the shelter of only a negro cabin became her lot, though whether the young mother knew that this was to be so cannot be said.

When the surgeon returned to his post of duty, little Georgia lived under the bountiful care of his young wife and of Dr. Lindsey Durham, father of the surgeon, and a noted root and herb doctor of Clarke County. This grandfather by adoption got his knowledge of how to combat the maladies of his day directly from the Creek Indians, who were still inhabiting the surrounding woods when the doctor built his house on the bluff overlooking the Oconee River. He had been successful and was counted rich in his day.

Dr. Lindsey Durham's wife and daughter-in-law loved little Georgia with a devotion like that of an own grandmother and mother. It was not long before the child learned to read, and she would render passages from the Bible to the household. She was an affectionate child, responding with a sad sweetness to the love bestowed upon her.

Finally her foster father came home from the war. Eventually plans were made for settling in some town of

FATE GOES FAR AFIELD

promise for the practice of his profession. Familiar with the counties neighboring upon Clarke, Dr. George Durham decided to move into McDuffie, and establish his office in Thomson.

Georgia was about 12 years old when she moved to Thomson. She went to school, standing well in her classes, and was one of the brightest pupils any of the Thomson schools of that day and time ever knew. There are still living in Thomson girlhood friends of the adopted child who recall her unusually sweet nature and bright mind.

Georgia did not go to college. When she finished the public school in Thomson she devoted herself to the interests of Dr. Durham and his wife, seeking to show her appreciation of their care of her in the work she did to make their home the more attractive. Devoted to Mrs. Durham, she took much of the responsibility of the home upon herself and was virtually the housekeeper.

Dr. Durham was wont to partake freely as well as frequently of strong drink. This was of much concern to his wife. It was Georgia's part to check the tendency before Dr. Durham, yet a man under middle age, should get into the toils of a habit he could not break. At times the physician would get on prolonged "sprees," when he had to be sobered up. Georgia's tender care of him at these times endeared her to him all the more. He often told her he did not believe he could ever consent for her to leave his home. Mrs. Durham often said their house would be no longer home without Georgia. The loving, dutiful girl, the pride of her community, made up her mind that she owed a life-long debt to the Durhams; that she would never leave them—that she would never marry.

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

However, she was not left to herself on this account. Her fine character and simple, natural beauty made her a prize well worth the striving of any of the young gentlemen of Thomson and vicinage. There were suitors, and there were engagements. Report, not difficult of verification, has three engagements to Miss Georgia's credit. In response to the impassioned entreaties of each of these suitors the young woman, sweetly appreciative of their respective suits, would put off naming a day on which to wed.

In truth, she did not intend to wed, but in the case of each engagement she had but yielded to ardent wooing in the spirit of: Well, if I ever marry any man, you will be my choice. It was in this way that she had neither married nor broken a heart.

Georgia yearned for a life of quiet devotion to duty and the service of all she knew. She was a friend to all, loving little children and happy when she could bring joy into their lives. The second floor of the Durham home she turned into a school room and here she taught a small, private school, finding full mead of happiness in training children in their early years. Her great, generous nature leavened the lives of little boys and girls with the richness of her own, and in this work she was content.

Into the beautiful calm and sunshine of this young woman's life there came, in the summer of 1877, the turbulent tide of Thomas E. Watson's. Possessing a natural gallantry, this young lawyer of promise began paying court to a young woman whose whole nature was in sharp contrast to his and, for this very reason, drew him to her.

Of turbulence there was enough indeed, for early this very summer his affair with Theodosia had been broken off.

FATE GOES FAR AFIELD

She had refused to be dictated to as to receiving other company, and her father had told her to cease exchanging letters with Watson.

As for Tom, he had readjusted his own point of view. He began to feel that Theodosia was not the girl he wanted to marry. Her people were prominent, well to do, but both Tom and Theodosia now saw clearly that his dictatorial attitude and her stubborn resentment of it would never harmonize.

He now concluded that she was not meant for him, and a visit one June evening ended their affair. Whatever there was in the way of an engagement was definitely cancelled. She was receiving the attentions of another young man, more favored of her family than Watson, at the time, and Tom wound up the scene of the evening by telling Theodosia to "go to this man you have determined to wed, listen to his childish prattle, and make yourself believe, if you can, that it is the music of your life." He left her unmoved, branding the "prattle" further as "honeyed words that were sugar-coated lies." A letter or two exchanged between them, but there was not another visit.

Tom's courtship of Georgia came close upon the break with Theodosia. Each visit to the Durham home riveted yet more firmly his resolve that he must have her for his wife at all cost. He dreamed of her by day and closed his eyes at night only after he had breathed a prayer for her. The spirit of this fine young woman called to his with that finality born only of destiny. She was the one woman—there was none other for him. None other who would ever understand him, sympathize with him, be patient with him. And well he knew what it would cost any woman who married him.

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

When Tom came to know Georgia, he forgot every other girl he had known. He counted his regard for all others as mere dross beside the passion which overwhelmed his soul for her. Love anyone else? Never! Never would his spirit find its true mate again. Never would his life be what destiny had marked out for it should she fail to cast her lot with his.

In this extreme of anxious longing Tom urged more and more sincerely his suit. He declared his conviction that fate intended this woman for him of all men—and truly he believed it, for hers was in the truest sense the nature which should go with his.

Georgia held back. Something told her to wait. Something told her that should she share her lot with Tom, the sweet calm of life would never be hers again. She understood him; she knew somewhat of the cost. Yet she was drawn to him—she loved him.

Her last affair began to wane. Engaged in a somewhat indefinite manner to another, Georgia realized that she loved only Tom. Yet she counted the cost. Her life would be always upon the mountain top of inspiration or in the valley of shadow. She knew it; Tom knew it. It was inevitable. Yet so was their love.

The Durhams did not approve of any marriage for Georgia. She was frail, by no means strong, and they believed she would be better off, happier, unmarried. She agreed with them. Besides, her spirit had not yearned for marriage, but the life of freedom in which to love and serve all mankind.

She told Tom she felt it to be her duty to consider the wishes of her foster parents; they had done so much for her; she would rather die than be ungrateful. Yet she

FATE GOES FAR AFIELD

loved this intense young man who paid court to her with a zeal she knew only too well was born of sincerity. She knew he loved her more than anything else in all the world.

One evening Georgia told Tom he would have to wait—perhaps forever. She could not give him the answer he wanted now, nor could she hold out hope for him. He believed it was the end, that she had made love give way before what she believed was duty. He could not answer her for a while. The moment was too fraught with crushed hope. He looked into Georgia's face, beautiful in the sadness there now, and tears came into her eyes.

"Tom," she said, "you know I love you. I love you for your own deep love and for your great ambition. I want you to have the love and encouragement you will need in all the big things which you will undertake. I want to see you go to the top of your ambition, and I shall always be proud to know that you were my friend—my sweetheart.

"Yet you must understand. I must be grateful to my foster parents. They have given me all the chance in life I ever had. They don't want me to leave them yet. I can't do it now. They need me, and I cannot fail them.

"Go on with your work; try to forget for a while. Maybe—but I cannot promise—maybe the time will come when we can have each other. I would love for that time to come, but I cannot promise you now."

Tom's spirit sank into that despondency which was one of the moods that characterized his whole life. From out the feeling of a sealed doom to unhappiness, he spoke to her in the bitterness of his heart.

"You have no cause to blame yourself. It is my fault. So far as love is concerned, I risked everything and have

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

lost everything. It was folly, perhaps, but had a thousand worlds been at stake, I would have risked them all to have won you.

"I am not so contemptible as to wish you ill because I have been unsuccessful. My devotion to you is far purer than that. Go on in the path you have chosen, and if into the solitude I shall always occupy there comes to me a consciousness that you are happy, I will try to think that it was all for the best."

He halted, trying to force back his emotion. It was a trying moment for both.

"I have certain objects I wish to accomplish," he went on, "but when they are done I don't care what comes. Life's greenness is gone from me forever. But remember, I wish you to waste none of your sympathy on me. Had I won you there would have been no balm like the sweet influence of your sympathy. Now it is otherwise; yet I am glad when you say my progress will always be a concern of yours. I would be glad to have you think that my objects were worthy, my motives above censure, that I was doing the best I could amid a thousand difficulties.

"If other incentives fail, there is one which will still inspire to effort. I wish my record to be bright enough to save you from a blush when you think that you once allowed me to believe you loved me. This dream, cherished so fondly, I must drop into the still waters of forgetfulness. I shall love you as long as the life blood stirs my heart."

His tone now assumed utter hopelessness; his speech revealing that he could wish for nothing at the hand of fate, if she were not to be his.

"And now since I know that I can't live for you, earth

FATE GOES FAR AFIELD

could give me no choicer boon than to die for you. Our lives separate. You follow what you believe is your duty, and may it bring you content. I go my way alone, onward, and, if God wills, upward.

"I did think that I could make your life greater and happier, as well as my own. If it was an error, it was an honest one, and one for which I certainly am atoning. Every day there fall around us green affections, rosy hopes and noble purposes. All we can do is press on. At our parting I must confess to your rare courtesy. I leave with the same impression I have always had, that you are the most wonderful woman I have ever known. You demand the greatest sacrifice a man ever made, but if it is for your sake I will make it."

Georgia was unable to speak again. He was in a state of hopeless dejection as he left her. He went home and flung himself upon the bed to think. Could he give her up? He knew he could not. Was this defeat? He could not afford to say it was, that he was whipped. This woman, whom, as he veritably believed and had a right to believe, God had sent to him—should she be taken from him? He did not believe it should be so—that God intended it to be so.

This woman, whose every mood was the cheer his spirit needed, whose mind was the one which could march down life's pathway with his own, whose sweetness was the sunshine which should drive away the clouds of his gloomy nature, whose whole nature was deep and pure and strong—a nature he would never find again—must he give her up? Must he give up the battle for her who would be his very life? He would never do it if it took his whole life to win her!

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

And so the campaign of love was kept up. New tactics were thought of and employed. New onslaughts, revealing a resourcefulness he had not dreamed he possessed, were made, and no stone was left unturned to win the hand of Georgia.

For weeks during this most trying summer Tom lay on a sofa in his office, unable to think of anything or anybody save Georgia Durham. His disposition, naturally, was to give up entirely to a longing or a grief, and his anxiety over the outcome of his fight for the woman he loved became a veritable obsession. So chained to the one subject was his mind that it became benumbed to everything else. Small respite did his first law cases give him. They were but a matter of a few weeks' work, and there was a long, hot summer for despondency. Moroseness yielded to morbidness and this almost to desperation.

Little wonder that when "Shep" Wright jumped on Top Watson to beat him up, Tom became enraged. And little wonder that he attacked Wright.

Wright was rated a bully, though a man of means and influence. Top Watson worked a farm about three miles from Thomson for him on shares. Wright was overbearing toward his employees, frequently cursing and abusing them, and sometimes striking them. One day he arrived at the farm in a high state of temper, seeking every opportunity to vent his ill humor. As he rode into the lot on a wagon of oats, he spied Top in the field with the hands. Top was half sick, under the care of Dr. Durham. Wright yelled to him to get a plow and go to plowing the cotton. Though this work had just been completed, Top did as he was told, entering the lot to get a plow. Wright jumped down from the wagon and grabbed Top.

FATE GOES FAR AFIELD

He forced the youth's head between his knees and began beating him. Top was afraid Wright would beat him half to death, but another man on the wagon got down and interfered.

When Brother Tom heard of Top's experience, he went into a violent rage. He sought out Wright. Meeting him on the street mounted, Tom jerked Wright's riding switch out of his hand and struck him in the face with it. He then armed himself for trouble. Several times Wright tried to ride Tom down on the street, but each time Tom "threw his gun on him" and stopped him.

Wright instituted a prosecution against Tom for pointing a pistol at another. Tom knew he was guilty of this act, though he felt justified in it. However, he settled the matter with Wright who agreed not to prosecute. Just what the settlement was is not known, but it was a compromise which cost Tom some money.

The fight to win Georgia was not lessened. Tom went on with it, trying always to control himself that he might fight a man's fight.

It wore on until March 1878. Then one night—the answer. It was yes. It threw him into a state of wild joy that this poor pen had best not try to describe. Rather let Tom, himself, do it. And happy we are that the fragment with which this chapter began does so. It is near the beginning of the manuscript, which deals first with a picture of the devoted wife at the time its author was writing, that we find:

"Did ever the bright stars look down upon a happier man than I the night she said she loved me—me the moneyless village lawyer who had barely a good coat to his

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

back? Shall I ever forget how the world looked that night as I reeled to my room, literally intoxicated with joy, and throwing my arms apart as I said under my breath, over and over again: 'Happy as a king! Happy as a king!'

"It was midnight, fortunately no one saw me. I had surely been taken for a madman. How I rolled and tossed till day; how I luxuriated in dreams of happiness; how I pictured the ideal life we should lead; how I did thank God from the very depths of my soul for the bliss which had come upon me!

"Ah, me! Once, *once* I was drunk with happiness! That night, *that* night I lay in heaven and breathed the thoughts of the pure, the divine. It may never be mine again, but that night I drank deep of the nectar of the gods."

CHAPTER XIV

IN THE SHADOW OF THE GREAT

HON. ALEXANDER H. STEPHENS in the latter '70's was the political oracle of Georgia. To his seat at Crawfordville in Taliaferro County, flocked the politicians—place hunters and ring leaders. His companion in the fight against Georgia's secession nearly twenty years earlier, Hon. Herschel V. Johnson, who had been United States Senator, Democratic nominee for Vice-President on the Stephen A. Douglas ticket (a race Johnson knew well enough Abraham Lincoln would win), and Governor of Georgia, was now Judge of the Superior Courts of the Middle Circuit. His every court was a mecca for politicians too; but the able jurist, who loved righteousness in law, justice in the courts more than he loved political preferment either for himself or his friends, never forgot his office as judge, and not once did he permit political influence to interfere with the rigor with which he enforced the law.

Screven County, close to Taliaferro, was in Judge Johnson's circuit. It was not infrequent that lawyers attending court in Screven adjourned to a political fest at Crawfordville when it closed, as did lawyers in other circuits. They sat at the feet of the Sage of Liberty Hall to hear words of wisdom. These had wide range. They foretold political successes and defeats, and placed an estimate upon many a figure already illustrious in the aftermath

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

of the war. Bob Toombs, Ben Hill—what did Stephens think of them? And what did he think would have become of slavery had there been no war? Was the Civil War inevitable? Would the South ever get over it?

This frail man who, as Vice-President of the Confederacy, wore himself out in toil for a cause which, in his view, was pure white in its justice because the sole champion of the Constitution, but which grew out of inexpediency, was now looked upon as Georgia's prophet—she would rise from defeat and become great and strong if Stephens said so.

Forth to Liberty Hall went the politicians for a big barbecue on July 4, 1878. Of course the event was not sponsored by Mr. Stephens, but was, in fact, held for him. He was the speaker of the day. The feast and speeches were had in town, after which the gentlemen behind the event were to adjourn to the home of the statesman hard by.

Watson had attended court in Screven County in May, and had delivered another temperance speech which aroused the community. He was in Screven mainly on a visit to Glenn Thompson, but did not lose the opportunity to witness the magnificent judicial presence of Herschel V. Johnson. Seen by a number of temperance enthusiasts of the Little Horse Creek vicinity, he was persuaded to attend another of their meetings and pour forth his denunciation of the legalized liquor traffic. When he returned to Thomson he realized that he had become one of his section's "most principallest citizens." He would go to the 'cue at Crawfordville, and hobnob there with the most astute hobnobbers.

IN THE SHADOW OF THE GREAT

Well did he recall the first time he saw "Little Elleck." It was when "the hero" was a candidate for Congress in 1872. Stephens and Herschel V. Johnson had been elected to the United States Senate in 1866, but the Republican majority, which was overwhelming, had refused to seat them. Again, in the Georgia Legislature of 1872, a bitter fight had been on to elect Stephens to the Senate, but the illustrious General John B. Gordon had won out over him. Now, in the campaign months of that year, Stephens was put in the field to go back to Congress by General Robert Toombs, his Jonathan, who had persuaded all other aspirants to stay out of the race.

McDuffie County was in Stephens' district and Thomson on his campaign list, though he had no opposition. Tom went to hear him in the Methodist Church. The school boy was deeply impressed with the shrill impassioned voice of the statesman, now by no means in his prime, and who was a veritable walking skeleton. Stephens gave them a résumé of his great antebellum speech in Congress on the Oregon question wherein he had compared the American scheme of government to Ezekiel's vision.

A ring of Augusta politicians, led by Judge Gibson, was seeking to eliminate Stephens from the arena of public life at the time of the Crawfordville 'cue. They had ends to serve he did not approve and he was in the way. When Watson and Paul Hudson, prominent Thomson lawyer, reached Stephens' home, he was already surrounded by a coterie of friends. Tom gave him some flowers Miss Georgia Durham had sent. His imperious dignity softened at the gift, and gallant words were spoken in honor of the belle of Thomson. Then somebody handed

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

Mr. Stephens the morning *Augusta Chronicle*, which had always fought him. Glancing at the leading editorial, Stephens said:

"Well, Paul, I see this fellow means a fight," and threw the paper to the floor.

The statesman was carried to the church and lifted to the rostrum in his roller chair. His deliverance, which was lengthy, showed some of the old time fire, but in the main was not up to the Stephens standard. The high-pitched, rasping voice was now too weak for all to hear. When he finished he was informed dinner was not ready, and called for a speech from each county represented. Charley McGregor delivered an eloquent speech for Warren. John McWhorter took care of Greene, and Shewbrick held the platform for Wilkes. Hudson was called on, but made himself hard to find. Stephens asked Watson to speak for McDuffie and he filled the bill.

That evening the lawyers sat on Mr. Stephens' back piazza, eating peaches and talking politics. Watson and Hudson went upstairs and lay down in a room, the walls of which were hung with framed letters Stephens had written to noted men and which had been history-making. Tom felt a tide of great associations sweep over him. The shrill voice of the Sage continued to come up from the piazza and the two went back down. Stephens was telling of the time he kept Toombs from speaking when Ben Hill made his celebrated Bush Arbor speech—Hill, the bitter enemy of the Sage. Stephens declared this effort of Hill was the mightiest philippic in the English tongue. He then specially complimented Watson on his speech of that day, and turned him and Hudson over

IN THE SHADOW OF THE GREAT

to Quin, a black boy, to be shown their room. The black talked glibly of the redoubtable Toombs, and disparagingly of Hill, just as his master so often did. Wakened by the boy, Watson and Hudson caught the midnight train for Thomson.

Watson was a frequent visitor at Liberty Hall during the period when Stephens was dictating his History of the United States to his amanuensis, John M. Graham (later Assistant Reporter of the Supreme Court and Court of Appeals of Georgia). Stephens would dictate in the mornings and spend the afternoons swapping anecdotes with guests—and he had them virtually every day—on the back piazza. One of his close friends had a penchant for telling “smutty” jokes. Mr. Stephens would listen, hold in his laughter, and say: “You’d better shut your dirty mouth!”

Easily flattered, he was nevertheless shy when praise was bestowed upon him in company, for timidity was a part of his make-up. One day Watson heard a boy tell Mr. Stephens that his School History of the United States was taught in the school the lad attended.

“You don’t say so,” began the statesman, only to break off his remark when he caught Watson’s eye.

Watson was at Crawfordville later to represent, at a commitment hearing before a justice of the peace, two young men accused of murdering an old man. Feeling against the youths was high. Following the hearing Watson repaired to Liberty Hall for supper. It being late, supper was over but Mr. Stephens ordered the mulatto cook to fix something for Watson. While Tom was eat-

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

ing, a man who was an habitual drunkard staggered into the room. Glaring at Watson, he exclaimed:

"You are up here to turn two guilty dogs alose, and you know it!"

Watson told him he knew nothing of the sort and went on eating. From the supper table he went into Mr. Stephens' room where a round of whist was in progress. The cook had reported the man's presence to the host. Almost as soon as Watson was seated, he lurched into the room, but met the stern rebuff of the Sage.

"Mr. Blank, I want you to get out of my house," said the host.

"You won't go back on me, will you, Mr. Stephens?" he whined.

"Mr. Blank, I never go back on anybody; but you are drunk and you have insulted one of my guests, and I want you to leave my house." He left.

Watson sometimes ran across Toombs at Crawfordville. The friendship that existed between Toombs and Stephens amounted to adoration, each for the other, and lasted as long as they lived.

It was back in the summer of 1871 at Thomson that Tom first saw Toombs. The boy walked to town for the mail one day and passed a regal-looking stranger on the street. No man ever passed the leonine Toombs without looking back. He was the lion always. In repose, instead of that collapse into weakness characteristic of most men, he was the lion asleep. And awake he was the lion—the alert, kingly lion of self-conscious power. Tom just knew this must be General Toombs, and he stopped Judge

IN THE SHADOW OF THE GREAT

Cartledge to ask him who was "that man." His intuition was borne out in the reply of the judge, whom, as Toombs had passed him on Main Street just ahead of Tom, the General had impertinently addressed as "Mr. Catt-ledge." The incivility had grown out of a law case.

When Tom was in school he often spent his recess periods at the courthouse at the other end of the square listening to Toombs trying a case. It would often be General Toombs and General Ranse Wright, big lawyers of their day, pitted against each other. His boyish mind was all a-glow with visions of the man, for his mother had told him that Toombs caused the war.

When Tom returned to Thomson in 1876, Paul Hudson introduced him to the General at the hotel. Mention was made of the low state of Tom's law practice. Toombs said: "Well, Mr. Watson, you will get the benefit of the rise," and all broke into a round of laughter.

The witty W. D. Tutt tried to prod Toombs on the paper money question, knowing the General was no Greenbacker.

"General, the only thing that I don't like about this Greenback money is that I can't get enough of it," Tutt said.

"Yes, you'd drink sea water till you d—d belly busted, and you'd never know that you were killing yourself," came the quick retort, which made everybody roar, including Tutt, but which stopped the argument.

Tom went to Crawfordville later to collect a claim against the Hillman estate, which was represented by Toombs. He met the General at the Williams House

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

where Toombs had formerly reserved a room by the year to keep the landlord from putting anybody in his quarters. This was when his practice took him to Taliaferro County every month. The incident now being mentioned to him, Toombs turned to Watson and said, with a flourish of his arm:

"Oh, I told Williams that if a gentleman came along, and there was no other room vacant, he might be put in mine; but I didn't want any and everybody sleeping in my bed."

Watson asked the General if the statement in the various biographies of Stephens that Stephens never lost a case in court was true.

"No! It is not so. I won a whole lot of cases against him, myself."

On this occasion there were quite a number of notable lawyers at the hotel, among them Judge William M. Reese, Milton Reese and Hal Lewis. All sat around the fire in Judge Reese's room to hear Toombs talk. Watson and Lewis lay across the foot of the bed. Everybody who gathered around the majestic Toombs stood in awe of him, and seldom was it that one had the temerity to interrupt or question his word. Besides, Toombs, from his marvelous storehouse of knowledge treated by a profound intellect and colored with the most irresistible wit, poured forth a discourse that few ever cared to interrupt.

Of course the younger members of the bar knew well enough to keep their mouths shut. However, on the occasion with which we deal, General Toombs, discoursing on the question of the repeal of the Missouri Compromise,

IN THE SHADOW OF THE GREAT

made a statement Watson knew was incorrect from a research he had made just a few days before.

Before he took thought, Tom blurted out a correction. It was like damming up Niagara suddenly, only to be overwhelmed in the greater deluge. Turning on Watson a look of wrath and contempt, Toombs roared:

"D—n it to h—ll! D'you suppose I don't know what I'm talking about?"

All around eyes were turned on the obscure pettyfog who had dared to interrupt Bob Toombs. Judge Reese said: "Why, Watson, Toombs was there." Tom was glad enough to let the whole thing drop, but he turned to whisper in Lewis' ear that he knew Toombs was wrong as to the particular fact.

In those days the old General was very much in his cups. He was reckless in abuse and cared nothing for the opinion of any man. Later, following a bitter tirade in which he called Joseph E. Brown (ex-War Governor of Georgia) a thief "for stealing the lands of orphan children," and which Toombs caused to be printed, Joe Brown issued a card branding Toombs "an unscrupulous liar." Everybody expected a duel, even between two old men, but somehow Toombs failed to issue a challenge. Bishop George F. Pierce, Methodism's illustrious orator, told Watson on the train between Camak and Sparta that Toombs' wife wouldn't let him fight.

CHAPTER XV

A JURY LAWYER

IN the fall of 1878 Watson formed a law partnership with Preston B. Johnson, a poor youth who had come to Thomson to get a start. Johnson made a living keeping books for a merchant while reading law under Watson. When he applied for admission to the bar Watson was one of the committee appointed by Judge Gibson to examine him. He was duly recommended and admitted. Remembering his own difficulties, Watson, now well on the road to success, gave Johnson a chance by associating him in his practice.

Tom made \$474 in the second year of his practice, paid Professor Pearce the board money due for the first, and with help from friends of the family he met the first payment due on the farm. He attended justices' courts, as well as the higher courts, in several counties, often riding all day in the rain, scorning neither the \$2.50 fees earned in the former nor the rare \$25 ones in the latter. It was seldom that a fee was more than \$25 during the first two years after his return to Thomson.

In the meantime his suit for the hand of Miss Georgia had been so ardent that the wedding was no longer delayed. It was a simple affair. There were no attendants and only eight persons were at Dr. Durham's home on White Oak Street to witness the ceremony.

At the appointed hour on October 9, 1878, Tom repaired

A JURY LAWYER

to his fiancée's home, accompanied only by Preston Johnson. In the parlor were Dr. Durham, Mrs. Martha Durham, his wife; John S. Watson, Tom's father; Rev. J. W. Ellington, Mrs. Mary Curtis, Miss Sallie Bush, and Miss Agnes Drake. Johnson quietly took his seat and the Rev. Ellington stationed himself for the brief ritual. Tom and Georgia marched in from the hall without music and faced the preacher. The ceremony was over in short order.

They lived with the Durhams for a short time; but it soon became apparent that son-in-law and mother-in-law were not going to live in harmony. Mrs. Durham desired to maintain a degree of authority over her adopted daughter that was somewhat galling to Tom. He informed her that Georgia now belonged to him. Mrs. Durham maintained that the marriage did not alter the fact that she had reared Georgia. The up-shot of the situation was that Tom bought a home on the same street and into it he and Georgia moved in January 1879. The freedom of his own home lifted Tom's spirit and the joy of living now was his for the first time since he left his mother's knee. The sweetest wife in the world was his—patient, loving, kind and ever ready to share a burden or a joy. He thrilled at this wondrous new freedom. The procession of life could now go on; he was ready to join it for good or ill.

The relaxation that ensues upon the safe passage of each epoch in a man's life is but the fertile soil for the implanting of the seed which shall bring forth the next. Watson now had that brief period of calm which furnished an opportunity for a readjustment of his outlook—a survey of his environs. What were now the forces

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

moving around him? What the telling influences, the marked courses of destiny, the avenues of advancement?

His receptive mind began to judge of the things of his day. He realized that the one avenue of opportunity was politics. He realized further that more things were done by politics than by anything else. So he began to hobnob. That was the way. Get in with the crowd that caucussed; for the legal profession, in that day and time, was spending most of its time caucussing. Law offices foregathered more political conferences than legal consultations. The fruitage was slate-making. Candidates and office holders were handpicked by the lawyers—and elected by the lawyers. The voters waited to be told. And if the office had to be filled by executive appointment or legislative election, the star-chamber meetings of the lawyers picked the committee with just the right tone to its affiliation to wait upon the one, or occupying the most strategic position to lobby the other.

The Augusta bar had determined to get rid of Judge Gibson, for years jurist of the Augusta Circuit. After a siege of under-ground attacks and newspaper billingsgate, the wire-pullers went to Atlanta to properly line up the Legislature of 1878, which, under the Georgia Constitution of 1877, elected the superior court judges. The result was that Claiborne Snead, of Augusta, was elected over Gibson and C. C. Jones.

Judge Snead's backers telegraphed the lawyers of every county in the circuit to attend a banquet in Augusta. Watson and Johnson went from McDuffie. The celebration was staged in Lex Henson's spacious dining rooms, noted for stag gatherings. And gathered now were not

A JURY LAWYER

lawyers alone. Editors, poets, newspaper reporters, cotton factors, and even preachers surrounded the board. Nor was it a time for decorum. One champagne cork after another popped, and merriment prevailed. It more than prevailed—it caused man after man to attempt a speech and sit down in disgust.

Henry Cohen got off some puns nobody could make sense of. Boykin Wright tried to quote Tom Moore, but had to give it up. Snead spoke jubilantly, as he felt, but Gibson, though he had partaken of the means of merriment, endeavored to appear optimistic, and failed. There were words from the satirical H. D. D. Twiggs, of whom we shall have considerable need to speak further on, and there was a brilliant deliverance from James R. Randall, celebrated author of "Maryland, My Maryland." As the fun and the flavor kissed each other at the peak of the celebration, Watson was called on. The moment was most propitious, but almost disastrous, for the roars of laughter which ran throughout his speech came near precipitating the banqueters into the street. W. T. Gary whooped and yelled so they had to hold him. It was a glorious night in more ways than one, and it registered Tom Watson with the political bosses of his neck of the woods.

The law practice was now pursued with renewed zeal, Watson extending his reputation as a criminal lawyer. In the civil practice he was not doing so well, largely because he was so eagerly sought for in criminal cases that he had no time for studied preparation. Engaged in a civil case, he was often forced to neglect it for a criminal case in which a bitter fight would be staged. The pressure

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

brought to bear upon him to take the latter was well nigh irresistible. Besides, criminal cases were mostly fought out before a jury, and Watson was pre-eminently a jury lawyer. His method was to go to the jury and win there; he didn't intend for there to be any appeal.

He was just as effective on one side of a criminal case as the other, and was engaged to prosecute as often as to defend.

The spring and fall of 1879 witnessed a considerable number of cases, civil and criminal, handled by Watson, in McDuffie, Columbia, Taliaferro and Warren Counties; but those which served his reputation most were the Dennis Holden and Aiken Stanford cases in McDuffie Superior Court.

In the former, tried in March, Watson was employed by one Lum Roberts to assist the state in the prosecution of Dennis Holden for assault with intent to murder, growing out of the alleged attempt by Holden to poison Roberts with "doctored" whiskey. The state's case, in brief, was that Holden, out of revenge for alleged attentions to his wife by Roberts, took Roberts from a church at Wrightsboro to a private place and gave him a drink from a bottle of liquor into which he had put eight grains of strychnine, inducing Roberts to take a drink by telling him he had saved that last drink for him. They returned to the church, and soon Roberts was seized with an attack and fell to the floor. There was a commotion and Holden fled and hid the bottle.

The evidence of motive, however, was wholly lacking, the witness by whom it was to be shown that Holden had accused Roberts of attentions to his wife being ill and

A JURY LAWYER

unable to come to court. However, Solicitor-General Dutcher decided to go to the jury as the case stood. He spoke one hour, and court recessed for supper. Court, and a huge crowd of spectators, reassembled and the trial proceeded by candle light. W. D. Tutt made the sole argument for the defense and it was in keeping with his seasoned ability. Realizing Watson's singular power before a jury, Dutcher had agreed for him to make the state's last argument. It was the first time Tom had the conclusion on Tutt. He guarded his delivery. Feeling much of the abandonment to his task which possessed him back at Mercer when he defended the memory of Aaron Burr, he summoned his powers of logic as well as oratory. At midnight the jury brought in a verdict of guilty. Judge Snead told Watson that if it hadn't been for his harangue the defendant would have been acquitted. His fee was \$45.

✓ In the Stanford case, a trial for murder in September, Watson was associated with H. C. Roney and the invincible H. D. D. Twiggs for the defense. Solicitor-General Dutcher and Tutt represented the state. The evidence showed the case to be a most revolting one. A white woman was found dead about half a mile from Dearing, her throat cut. Following a coroner's inquest a negro was committed to jail on evidence tending to incriminate him, but later, upon his talking more freely, a warrant was issued for Stanford, a white man. The state built up a case to the effect that Stanford had gone to the woman's house, decoyed her out into the woods where a negro, not the one above, was waiting for him, and after a struggle with the woman had slashed her throat. Evidence was

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

further offered to show that Stanford then got this negro to go with him to Augusta, then across the river to the South Carolina side, and, while the two were sitting down talking, shot the negro dead to prevent his appearing against him in court. Of course, it was the murder of the woman for which Stanford was put on trial.

Feeling was high, the crime most atrocious, and the evidence most damning. This trio of almost insurmountable difficulties was the whetstone for sharpening the astute powers of men like Twiggs and Watson, the former some twenty years the senior of the latter and one of the most brilliant court room lawyers of his day anywhere in the nation. And Roney was a lawyer of talent and experience. The lines were sharply drawn, but where was the power that could save Stanford under this evidence, to uphold which the state offered a large array of witnesses, the actual cutting of the woman's throat being the only link fastened by circumstances?

It was Friday morning when the lawyers went to the jury. The defendant having put up witnesses, the state had the opening and concluding arguments. Dutcher opened in an argument of three hours and ten minutes. Following the dinner recess, Watson spoke for one hour and forty minutes. Roney spoke forty-five minutes, and Twiggs followed him in a magnificent speech of three hours. When Tutt closed his two-hour terrific denunciation of the defendant, it was past midnight.

The jury was out the balance of the night, was recharged the next morning, and at noon Saturday returned a verdict of not guilty. It was a most notable victory. To clear Stanford under the circumstances was an achieve-

A JURY LAWYER

ment to carry the fame of his lawyers throughout the length and breadth of the State, and Watson profited in this respect more than Roney and as much as Twiggs. But this equable distribution of the fruits of success did not extend to the fee. The lawyers charged Stanford \$350, but here is how it was divided: Roney \$75, Watson \$75, Twiggs \$200. Thus the toll of superior fame which made Watson say quietly to himself: Hereafter the lion's share must go to me.

Watson later admitted privately that Stanford was guilty of the foulest crime ever perpetrated in McDuffie County. Of course, that did not change his view that the man was entitled to a fair trial and skilled lawyers, nor did Watson ever regret his lawful efforts in behalf of his client. He was a member of that illustrious legal school which is grounded in the doctrine that it is the part of courts and juries to clear or convict; the part of lawyers to represent their clients.

But if Stanford escaped a merited punishment at the hands of a jury of his peers, which is not the author's to say, he came off less successfully at the hands of Providence. Some six years after his trial, while brakeman on a train, he was knocked from the top of a box car which was passing under a bridge as the train entered Atlanta. Thrown under the cars his legs were cut off below the knees, he was dragged a short distance and the remainder of his legs cut off above the knees. He died in a few hours.

The case in 1878 in which Watson took greatest pride in winning was that of the fight of a young unmarried mother for possession of her child. Teresa Barksdale took out proceedings to compel Jephtha Norris to support

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

the child. There was no denial that he was its father. The two signed a contract by which the father was to pay for the child's support and have possession of it when it became one year old. At the proper time he took the child. The next day the mother went to his place and took it back. Norris then sued out a writ of habeas corpus to get legal custody of the child. The mother employed Watson and Norris engaged Tutt.

Counsel for Norris proved the contract, the faithful performance thereof by the father, and that no objection was raised when it was signed. It looked pretty bad for Watson. He offered evidence that the father of his client forced her to sign the contract, threatening to drive her from his home; that her sister wrote it at her mother's direction; and that she complained of the agreement, declaring it was not of her own free will and accord.

Remembering that Alex. Stephens had made his mark at the bar in just such cases as this, Watson put his whole soul into it. The case Tutt had made out at first kept his argument from gaining with Judge J. H. Casey, of the County Court, before whom the case was tried. Finally the naked justice of his cause and the plight of an infant separated from its mother fired him to flights of oratory that turned the tide. When he closed the judge and the hearers were in tears, and the decision was his. He remembered throughout his life the deep gratitude of an unfortunate woman whose child was saved to her solely by the power of her lawyer.

CHAPTER XVI

A NEW LEADER BORN

THE fame of Watson as an orator was rapidly spreading, with the result usual at this period. He was importuned on every hand for addresses at school commencement exercises. Needless here to record the round of these he made in the country "academies." Typical among them was his elaborate address, "Victory," made to the graduates of Mercer High School at Penfield, now under the management of the Rev. Ellington, in July 1880. His theme was the legitimate nurture of ambition as the vehicle of the attainment of ideals. The poet had truly said that the paths of glory lead but to the grave; but whither leads any other path? The glorious and the inglorious go down into the dust. If the sentiment the poet breathed should be interpreted as a discouragement of the quest for honorable distinction, he would crush it beneath his feet. The yearning for fame was one of the noblest passions of the human breast. Let no man seek to take it from the idealism of youth.

These frequent speeches were the exhaust of that abundant passion and spirituality soon to vent itself in more important fields.

When Tom and "Miss" Georgia returned that summer from an extended trip in the North Georgia mountains, made with horse and buggy, he found that the appoint-

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

ment by Governor Alfred H. Colquitt of Joseph E. Brown as United States Senator to succeed General John B. Gordon, resigned, had created an uproar throughout Georgia. While there were friends of the ex-War Governor who gloried in his elevation, it must be said that for widespread unpopularity he was probably never superseded by any public man the State ever knew. ✓ Accused of having done more to invest the negroes with use of the suffrage and to install members of the race in office (mainly as members of the Legislature) than the Yankees had ever tried to do during Reconstruction, the name of Joe Brown was anathema from the mountains to the seaboard.

The question on all sides now was: would the appointment of Brown kill Colquitt? There were many considerations involved. Colquitt was backed by one of the most smoothly oiled political machines Georgia politics had known. His bestowal of the toga upon Brown was bad, many said, but would this alienate the practical politicians and their telling influence from a man already in office, holding the reins of power?

Watson had never admired Governor Colquitt, but the appointment of Brown crystallized his dislike into determined opposition he declared he would never yield. As the time approached for the election of delegates to the State Convention in Atlanta which was to nominate Presidential electors, a Governor and other State House officers for the ensuing term, he became a candidate. On his ticket, opposing the re-nomination of Colquitt, were Willis Howard, E. C. Hames and James L. Hardaway. The candidates espousing the Colquitt cause were W. H.

A NEW LEADER BORN

Smith, W. H. Stone, J. H. Casey and B. A. Willingham. Four were to be elected. Watson led the field. Howard and Hames were winners, but Hardaway lost to Casey. Watson was elated, however, as the result sent only one Colquitt with three anti-Colquitt men to the convention to represent McDuffie County.

The memorable convention opened August 4th, with the Colquitt forces in the majority. The battle centered upon the question of adopting the report of the committee on rules. This report favored the two-thirds rule, and was backed by the Colquitt forces who believed they could easily nominate a candidate if it were adopted, the opinion being that more than two-thirds of the delegates had come instructed for Colquitt.

Watson and most of the minority had centered on Rufus E. Lester, of Savannah, but their main purpose was to defeat Colquitt. The motion to adopt the two-thirds rule was put in a fiery speech by P. M. B. Young, of Bartow County. The Colquitt forces were led by Patrick Walsh, of Richmond County, who was mainly responsible for the two-thirds rule and who had even caused to be incorporated in the rules report the recommendation that no vote cast for a man for whom a delegate had not been instructed be counted, and that each delegate be required to show his county instruction for the man for whom he voted in the convention.

As the issue back at the polls had been in most, if not in all, of the counties, Colquitt and anti-Colquitt, with instruction for no particular opponent, the delegates who opposed him in the Convention, under the proposed rules, would be "hog-tied."

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

Walsh took the floor for adoption of the report and declared that the people of Georgia, by a decided majority in the election of delegates, had expressed their choice of Colquitt, and that his friends meant to stay in Atlanta until he was nominated.

It was at this juncture that Watson got the floor and delivered, in ringing tones, the brief but impassioned challenge which was his political birth. Here is a report of what he said:

Mr. Chairman, for the sake of answering the gentleman from Richmond, I have moved you the appointment of six delegates from each faction of this convention, Colquitt and anti-Colquitt, as a committee of conference who shall retire and select a candidate other than those before the body for nomination as Governor.

I have called over a list of Georgians whose names would sound a rally cry through all the ranks of State Democracy.

Not only these, Mr. Chairman, but—look among all their fellow-citizens and select a leader.

Sir, I am tired of hearing the cry of generosity, when I see no generosity [applause]; I am tired of this cry of harmony, when I see no harmony. [Applause.] I have not come here to be fattened on chaff, nor filled with taffy. You might as well attempt to gain flesh on corn cob soup in January. [Laughter.]

A Member—I will ask the gentleman from McDuffie if the adoption of the two-thirds rule was not generosity on the part of Colquitt's supporters?

Mr. Watson—No, sir! You adopted it because you knew your own men wouldn't stick to you in an attempt to pull it down. [Great applause.]

Mr. Chairman, I have said, and I now say, that I am here with no bitterness of party rancor. I have fought

A NEW LEADER BORN

this much-named gentleman, A. H. Colquitt. I have fought him honestly. I have advocated Rufus Lester. I have advocated him honestly. But high and serene above them both, above my opposition to Colquitt, above my support of Lester, rises my love, my devotion to my State, like the tranquil star that burns and gleams beyond the reach of the drifting clouds. [Cheers.] But sir, under the course of the gentleman from Richmond, I am debarred from this privilege. He tells us that we must yield to him, and that unless we nominate Colquitt that this party will permit no nomination. Mr. Chairman, this is not the language which a friend addresses to a friend. It is not the language a brother addresses to a brother. It is the language of a master to his slave. [Cheers.]

We are the slaves of no man. We haven't come here to bulldoze anybody and haven't come here to be bulldozed. [Cheers.]

Sir, a silken cord might draw me, but all the cables of all the ships that walk the waters of the seas cannot drag me. [Cheers.]

A member—Will the gentleman allow me to interrupt him?

Mr. Watson—No sir, I will not.

Sir, the gentleman from Richmond cannot drive us out by this threat. We have a right to be here; we have a purpose to serve here, and planting ourselves upon this right and wedding ourselves to this honorable purpose, we shall stay in this hall unawed by threats and undiscouraged by gags. [Cheers.]

A Member—I want to ask the gentleman a question?

Mr. Watson—I do not yield the floor.

Sir, the gentleman's position means that we must take Colquitt or the party shall be disrupted. Sir, if it must come, let it come. We love the party, honor it, are devoted to it, but we will not yield when the gentleman's speech has made it a loss of self-respect to surrender.

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

If they will split this convention, we will be here to the end [applause]; if they will sink the ship, we will remain in her shadow to the last. [Applause.] We would deprecate it. We would deplore it. But if she can only be saved on terms as unmanly as these, then—

“Nail to the mast her holy flag,
Set every thread-bare sail;
And give her to the god of storms,
The lightning and the gale.”

[Long, continued and enthusiastic cheers.]

“Who is that?” was heard on every hand, for the speaker, not yet 24 years old, was hardly known outside his judicial circuit.

“Why, that’s Tom Watson, of McDuffie County,” soon became the reply.

“He has stampeded the convention—look out, Colquitt,” was next heard.

In truth, for the time, the convention was completely taken off its feet. Watson had set off a rocket the like of which it had not seen. And the effect was beyond its portals. Delegates, spectators, newspaper reporters said a new star had risen in Georgia’s political firmament.

Watson was lionized. His speech was extemporaneous, but so thoroughly fixed in his mind that he dictated it to Sam Small, of *The Atlanta Constitution*, that night in his room at the Kimball House. It was printed in that paper, put on the wire and next day the State was humming with it.

“Dashing speech—breezy passage—the most brilliant speech in the convention—gave burning words to the world’s literature—created prolonged and renewed dem-

A NEW LEADER BORN

onstrations of applause—one of the finest specimens of spontaneous eloquence and stinging rebuke we ever read—the youngest member of the convention” are samples of the notices culled from city and country press.

But his motion to appoint a committee of conference was voted down. It was a renewal of one by another delegate which had been tabled, amid vociferous cheers of the Colquitt men, on motion of Walsh.

The well oiled steam roller of the convention was put in motion and debate was shut off. The effect of Watson’s speech was to cast him as an irreconcilable enemy to Colquitt. The next day he secured the floor long enough to say that the character of the Governor was beyond his attack; that, whereas the Walsh faction would disrupt the party or nominate Colquitt, he would not disrupt it save to prevent the majority from forcing their hand-picked candidate upon the convention by arbitrary rules; and that had it been open for the delegates to vote for whom they pleased, even for men not voluntarily in the race, and then had there been a failure to nominate, as between the alternative of nominating Colquitt or disrupting the party, he would have taken Colquitt.

“But we were shown from the first that we must take Colquitt,” he said. “They would try no other course. We were tied to the names before us. Hemmed up, penned up, starved out. It was then I said that these gyves being upon me, I could never go to Colquitt, and I never will. Upon this record I am willing to go back to my people; and if for this record I am to be sacrificed, I shall always think that I am entitled to a decent burial and an honorable epitaph.”

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

To this new utterance there was renewed applause, but the rules had been clamped down the day before. The delegate from Dougherty County, in support of them, had said with diverting sarcasm that the convention ought to furnish protection to prominent Georgians who did not want to be Governor. The rules were adopted by a vote of 197 to 145, and the anti-Colquitts walked out.

They held a separate convention and, after a general presentation of names, united upon Thomas M. Norwood, of Savannah, a former United States Senator.

With no further trouble, the Colquitt faction voted him as its candidate.

In the campaign which now ensued, Watson did his first stump speaking. In company with the eloquent George F. Pierce, namesake of the Methodist bishop, he toured county after county. The speeches of both won wide notice—Watson detailing, in virtually every county entered, the name of some one of its illustrious sons which the minority had tried to get the convention to accept, and declaring “but nobody in the State was good enough for the majority but Colquitt.” He assailed W. D. Tutt, who was campaigning for Colquitt, charging him with being afraid to meet him in joint debate. Tutt was saying on the stump that Watson “gave up the old ship to the lightning and the gale.” Watson’s sallies at Tutt were pointed and he dismissed him each time with—

“Stiff in opinion, stubborn, always wrong,
Everything by turns and nothing long.”

He always wound up with a sophomoric peroration likening Norwood and his cause to a “gathering cloud that

A NEW LEADER BORN

would rain happiness in the presence of the sun of principle and the bow of heaven as a promise of good government." Pierce arraigned the administration for its "fatal mistakes and fool appointments."

Watson fought hard and for his pains witnessed a most magnificent landslide for Colquitt. But why worry? There was the echo from the convention. He was told on all sides that he had made more out of the campaign than any man in the State.

CHAPTER XVII

FLING OF PASSION

W. D. TUTT was regarded as one of the ablest lawyers of his day in eastern Georgia. It was seldom that an important case developed in the Augusta Circuit, outside of the city itself, that did not draw him to one side or the other. This was true also of cases in courts of adjoining counties. His business, both on the civil and criminal side, was rapidly expanding, eliciting the admiration of the laity and exciting the jealousy of the bar.

The same was true of Watson. He was now constantly meeting the best legal talent in his part of Georgia—such lawyers as H. D. D. Twiggs (bearing the title of Judge for having been on the bench), H. C. Roney and J. H. Casey, already alluded to, and James Whitehead, Boykin Wright and George F. Pierce.

During the period from the gubernatorial election of 1880 to March 1882, Watson met Tutt in some eight or ten cases running the usual course of a prosperous lawyer's practice, such as arson, assault with intent to murder, assault, burglary and hog stealing, on the criminal side; and damages, ejectment and suit on promissory note on the civil. They represented the defendant together in one case—murder—which they lost, there being a conviction for manslaughter.

Notwithstanding the fact of Tutt's prowess, the

FLING OF PASSION

records show that Watson won three-fourths of the cases in which they opposed each other. Tutt came off better when fighting the lesser lights of the Thomson bar.

Litigants, as well as the general public, were not slow to put the logical interpretation upon the situation: Watson and Tutt were the Thomson lawyers likely to be reckoned with in any important case. This caused their frequent opposition; if the litigant or defendant in a criminal case couldn't get one, he hired the other.

The natural consequence was a sharp rivalry which produced a high tension when the two met in court. There was a distance and reserve between them, understood by judges, juries and spectators. Tutt and Watson were rivals—they might be expected to clash at any moment. Both able, high strung, sensible of their rivalry, it did not take much to produce the clash, and when it came the court was almost compelled to jail both to allay the outbursts of bitter feeling.

The situation became graver with each session of court, and it was now heard all around that the two lawyers refused to speak to each other on the street. Not only that—they were carrying pistols. So was Julian Watson, who wanted to be prepared to defend his brother if overpowered.

Boykin Wright, of the Augusta bar, now Solicitor-General of the circuit, receiving reports that the two Watsons and Tutt were toting pistols, laid the matter before the grand jury at the October term, 1881, of McDuffie Superior Court. It resulted in indictments for carrying concealed weapons being returned against Thomas E. Watson, Julian Watson, W. D. Tutt, and a number of other prominent citizens, not all of whom were

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

carrying them for the same reason. At this day and time this offense against the law was common.

The cases did not come up for trial until January 11, 1882, at which time the two Watsons pleaded guilty and were fined each \$25. Tutt pleaded not guilty, went to trial the next day represented by Judge Gibson, was found guilty and fined \$25.

The fiery Watson disposition was now embroiling him in a series of difficulties. His quick temper was one of his best known characteristics. There were those in Thomson who still remembered it as having marked him dangerous when but a boy. At the Thomson High School he was feared for his readiness to draw a knife. And when he drew it he always meant business.

At the March term, 1880, of the Superior Court there was an effort to indict him for shooting at another, growing out of a difficulty with a person whose name does not appear in the court records. The effort failed, however, the record showing that the grand jury returned a "no bill."

The high state of feeling between Watson and Tutt continued, lent perpetuity not only by legal rivalry, but also by the rancor engendered in their passes at each other during the Colquitt-Norwood campaign. Each closely watched the other with apprehension.

Shortly after the prosecutions for carrying concealed weapons, a representative of the concern of Bussey & Carswell, of Augusta, went to Thomson to employ a lawyer to collect a claim. Some effort was made to see Watson, but he was out of town. Whereupon Tutt was employed. Upon Watson's return he learned of the matter, and believed it to be his loss. He took the position—

FLING OF PASSION

whether correctly or incorrectly, it cannot be said—that had he been in town he would have gotten the case, and that Tutt, knowing this, had taken advantage of him.

He went down town and encountered Tutt in a law office. There is no ground for assuming that he was looking for Tutt. However, he was full of wrath about the Bussey & Carswell claim. Watson scowled at Tutt and Tutt frowned at Watson. Somebody unwisely mentioned the case. Words interchanged between the two lawyers. Tutt made a quite positive statement that irritated Watson, and he flung at Tutt——

“You’re a liar.”

Tutt rushed at Watson and struck him a terrific blow in the face. Watson leaped back and whipped out a revolver. Tutt raised a chair in front of his head and chest just as Watson opened fire. The bullet struck Tutt’s hand. Watson started to fire again, but was grabbed by Preston Johnson, who wrenched the pistol out of his grasp. The whole affair was over in a flash, but bystanders saw to it that the two did not remain in the same room. Tutt was taken to a doctor, while Watson was accompanied to the street. He was heard to say that Tutt “was trying to destroy him.”

Though many of Watson’s friends scouted the view that he was trying to kill Tutt, saying that Watson, the smaller man of the two, believed Tutt meant to beat him up when Tutt struck him, nevertheless Watson was indicted for assault with intent to murder at the next Superior Court on March 23rd.

The very next day Solicitor-General Boykin Wright called the case for trial. In the meantime most diligent work had been done by Watson’s friends to settle the

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

case. It being a criminal one, this could not be done out of court. The only settling that could be done was by way of getting Tutt and the Solicitor-General to agree not to push it but make such recommendation to the court as would head off a verdict. At any rate, no stone was left unturned to prevent a prosecution to the full extent of the law.

Valiantly did legal talent come forward and proffer its free services to its brother at the bar. From every county in the circuit, and some out of it, came offers of lawyers to represent Watson. From this elaborate array of counsel at his disposal, Watson picked the brilliant Major J. C. C. Black, of Augusta, and B. M. Gross and Gibson & Brandt, of Thomson. No talent was employed to join with that of Boykin Wright for the state.

A jury was empaneled and sworn. The case proceeded to trial. The state put up its evidence, consisting of the testimony of Tutt and other witnesses, and announced closed. Then friends of both sides suggested a settlement. Watson strenuously opposed this move, on the ground that he wanted vindication from the jury, but finally gave in upon condition that he be allowed to state his side of the case. This he did, and Judge Snead, with the consent of the Solicitor-General and Tutt, the prosecutor, announced to the jury that the case was withdrawn from its consideration. He turned and signed the following order upon the indictment:

Whereupon it is ordered, that good cause having been shown, the said case be and is hereby settled.

CLAIBORNE SNEAD,
Judge Supr. Court.

March 24th, 1882.

FLING OF PASSION

Of course the judge had the power to withdraw the case without the consent of counsel for the state or the prosecutor (though not without the consent of the accused), if he had the power to withdraw it at all; just as he would have had the power to direct a verdict of not guilty after the state's evidence had been offered, if such evidence had not made out a legal case for a jury's consideration; but withdrawal of the Watson case was done without final objection from any quarter. For the judge to declare "settled" a criminal case is a procedure few lawyers would say was legally warranted.

It is said that the case ruined Snead politically. At any rate at the Legislature which met that year his name was not presented for re-election as Judge of the Augusta Circuit, and that body bestowed the office upon H. C. Roney in his stead.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE FIRST RACE

ALTHOUGH the announcement by Judge Snead that the Tutt case against Watson was settled was greeted with applause, it did not come from a unanimous crowd. Talk became rife, people saying that had it been anybody but a lawyer the case would not have been stopped. W. O. Harrison, a court bailiff, giving too loose a rein to his tongue, commented adversely upon his Honor's conduct, and Judge Snead had him locked up for contempt. This was worse for Snead than for his bailiff, for it fairly roused the circuit against Snead.

Watson had determined soon after the Convention of 1880 to run for the Legislature. He believed the notoriety gained by his speech in it warranted his making the race.

But the Tutt incident had considerably diminished his chances. The enemies Snead had made brought out E. A. Shields as a candidate for the Legislature to fight Snead's re-election as Judge before that body, and Watson was embarrassed by the question put to him on all sides of what would he do? His reply was that he would not run as an anti-Snead man, but would vote against Snead in the Legislature if the people so instructed. While the lawyers were defending Snead, the farmers were against him, and this farmer-against-lawyer situation was not a

THE FIRST RACE

very inviting one to a politician of the less numerous calling.

From a diligent canvass, Watson found that the white vote would be about evenly divided, and that the negro vote would really decide who was to sit in the lower house of the next General Assembly as Representative from McDuffie County. He therefore took thought upon how it was to be secured. On July 29th a Republican meeting (which, of course, meant a gathering mainly of negroes) was held in Thomson to give each candidate a chance to express himself on what he would do for the black man if elected. Shields had already "dickered" with their "executive committee," and had the lead on Watson. The committee actually voted at one meeting to support Shields. Luckily for Watson there was a small attendance and those present reconsidered and postponed the question. In the meantime Watson got out and worked.

Forth to the negro mass meeting went both candidates and delivered addresses. One A. M. Hill laid before each a set of three resolutions he said the candidate who got the negro vote would be required to endorse. These were for free schools for negro children, change in the law on poll tax, and reform of the chain-gang system.

In his speech Watson openly advocated a reform of the system by which convicts were leased out to private concerns, and free schools. He declared he would try to make a fair Representative for all classes of citizens if elected.

Shields made a talk largely non-committal, and when the candidates were through, a resolution, endorsing

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

Watson on the ground that he endorsed the platform of the Republican Party, was read and adopted. Watson told Hill he could not accept the negro vote on that resolution because he did not endorse the Republican platform and had not said he did. As soon as the resolution supporting Watson was voted the meeting adjourned, but before the crowd left the hall Watson told them he did not endorse their platform and had not been asked to do so. He made this very plain to everyone present, but no move was made to reconsider the pledge to support him.

The negro meeting was on Saturday. That night and Sunday Thomson was rife with the report that Tom Watson had endorsed the Republican platform at a negro meeting—so charged by Shields men to disparage Watson's candidacy. Monday the white convention to nominate a State Senator for the Twenty-ninth District met in Thomson. Watson was told he was lost if he did not do something to kill the charge against him. He had circulars printed carrying a statement by a white man who attended the negro meeting to the effect that Watson had not endorsed the Republican platform, and detailing just what transpired there.

Watson then went before the convention, although so sick he could hardly stand up, demanded a hearing, got it and delivered a fiery speech, branding his accusers. He said they were after him for getting the "nigger" vote they had tried to get themselves. Hadn't Alex. Stephens gotten it, and Roney, and numerous others, and it was all right? Why was it wrong for him to secure the negro vote? He left the courthouse a triumphant victor. Shields withdrew from the race. The enemies of Watson, how-

THE FIRST RACE

ever, were not quitters, and they announced Dr. James S. Jones, who had held the office twice, as a candidate.

A mass meeting was called at Thomson to decide whether a convention should be held for the Democrats of the county to formally nominate a candidate for Representative. Watson offered a resolution that none be held and it was adopted. The race was to be an open fight between Watson and Jones without any nomination.

Determined to win this race at the bottom rung of his political ladder, Watson threw himself into it with uncompromising zeal. Roney, Representative at this time, had not offered for re-election because he wanted to be Superior Court Judge to succeed Snead, whose diminished star warranted Roney's high hopes. In fact, he was openly endorsed in a resolution presented to the Thomson white mass meeting by Preston Johnson and adopted.

Watson sallied forth each day to meet the enemy, encouraged by the love and loyalty of his sweet wife, whom he wanted to make proud. She wanted him to rise, and to help him she would put his ambition above all else, that she might enter into the atmosphere of his dreams.

And had she not already made him as proud as he could be? It was now nearly two years since Mrs. Watson presented her hero with a bouncing baby boy—born October 3, 1880, and named Durham for his adopted grandfather. Another reason why the father must garner success.

Just what kind of a race Dr. Jones was running is not easily to be learned, but Watson overlooked neither the foibles nor the fancies of the people. At Wrightsboro he

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

fiddled at barn dances and one of the girls refused to dance with any youth until he promised to vote for Tom Watson. Watson's doings in this race were a sight worth seeing. While he was furnishing first fiddle for all he was worth, a negro was playing second, and another negro was "knocking the agony out of a tambourine." It rallied the folks and got votes the tame methods of Dr. Jones couldn't reach.

At the gold mines in the northern part of the county, Watson curried favor with the foreman and took a trip underground to canvass the men. On election day the foreman stopped work and voted every man for Watson.

The energy of the opposition was expended mostly in talking the Snead incident. Watson's court room maneuvers of resisting settlement of the Bill Tutt case on the ground of wanting vindication from the jury were all a "stall," put on after he realized the case was going to be withdrawn, they said. He was tickled to death not to let the law take its course and shrewd enough to make capital of the situation by acting to the grand stand, they also averred.

The race for Representative was further complicated by the fact that W. D. Tutt was running for State Senator, having received the nomination at the hands of delegates from McDuffie and the other counties in the district. It appears that he had no opposition, and Watson wisely refrained from referring to his candidacy.

At the Kimball House in Atlanta, the main political rendezvous of Georgia in 1882, as it is today, Alexander H. Stephens, candidate for Governor, was holding daily

THE FIRST RACE

“pow wows” with candidates, voters and political celebrities of the State.

Watson betook him there to get a better angle on the situation, though he spared the time from his own field of conflict with reluctance. He visited the Sage’s suite every day, and was there when Mr. Stephens dictated a note to Senator Ben Hill, his old political enemy, now dying of cancer at his Peachtree Street home, asking if he might call. Himself near the grave, with his wrinkled, pallid face covered with ugly splotches, and thin, colorless lips, the old hero was too big a man to wish the man who had performed such valiant service for the South in the nation’s highest assembly, and for the entire nation in seeking to quench the fires of sectional hate, to pass away without their making peace in that bond of mutual esteem fitting between great men.

General Toombs, whose record as United States Senator, Secretary of State in the Confederate Government and Brigadier General in the Civil War, as well as whose secession stump speeches and powerful jury speeches, had made him the most talked of man in the South, was there. Watson saw him rise with difficulty from his table in the dining room and go toward the elevator. Two country politicians, emerging from Mr. Stephens’ room, recognized the General. One of them, anticipating quite innocently a conversation, said to the other that there was “old Toombs.” As they were bowing and smiling before him, to their utter undoing, Toombs, who had been drinking heavily, roared:

“Don’t call me old, sir! It’s a d—d offensive term, sir!

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

Get out of my way!" And he flourished his cane as he strode majestically on.

That night when Toombs descended to the bar, he was in a better mood for having had a nap. The crowd gathered around him as usual, and, of course, Watson didn't miss the chance. As he drew near he heard Toombs amid a roar of laughter:

"Well, boys, Henry Ward Beecher almost broke his heart over the morals of the South, and, by George, he has taken Theodore Tilton's wife away from him."

As the General's own "bay window" was shaking with laughter, somebody said: "Poor Tilton."

"Poor hell!" retorted Toombs. "I've got no more pity for Tilton than I have for Beecher. Tilton was an Abolitionist lecturer, too, and was just as fanatical about the South as Beecher was. Those two humbugs worked in harness together to bring on the Civil War, and now at this late day the preacher has to debauch his friend's wife. Nice fellows to go crusading on morals! Perhaps they did it on the idea that they were certain of their sins and damned doubtful of their salvation.

After he had taken a fling at "old Thad Stephens for living with a nigger wife," and "Cash Clay, of Kentucky, the Abolitionist who finally had to shoot a nigger," the General was asked by a Northern gentlemen if he didn't believe education would remove all the trouble between the white and negro races. Toombs looked as if he would insult the man, but changed his mind and answered that education never changed character and the essentials of nature.

Unreconstructed to the day of his death, Toombs had

THE FIRST RACE

no respect for the policies of caution. He actually believed that the course pursued by the North at this time would result in more conflict.

"But I am an old man," he went on. "My day is passed. The people seem to have lost heart. The South is ruled by as cowardly and venal a lot of place-hunting politicians as ever lived. Like putrid bodies in a stream, they rise as they rot. They would sell their souls for office. They lick the feet of Tammany corruptionists, and grovel in the dust before Northern money. But Southern pride and principle will one day assert themselves. Our people will not always submit to this damnable state of affairs. The issues will be rejoined some day and the South will be better prepared. Unless the North lets us alone, quits this everlasting business of trying to force us to accept the nigger as an equal, fate has no day more sure to come than another colossal Civil War, in which the East and North will be crushed by the South and West."

Here somebody remarked that Mr. Stephens counseled peace.

"I don't care a damn if he does," said Toombs. "So does Henry Grady, John B. Gordon, Ben Hill and L. Q. C. Lamar. What do I care for the talk of politicians and opportunists? They may cry peace till the heavens fall, but there will be no peace until good will is restored and this won't be by chin music. Let the North give us justice. Let them quit bothering our domestic affairs. Let them give over their hallucination that the nigger is a white man accidentally clothed in a black skin. Then the Union may again be one of love and patriotism.

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

At present it is one of force and no brave people can long be held down by force."

As Toombs wound up his philippic, he said: "Excuse me, boys, I've got to go and send a telegram to General Grant."

He strode over to the telegraph operator's desk and dispatched the following message:—

"General U. S. Grant,

"San Francisco, Cal.

"You fought for your country and won. I fought for mine and lost. Death to the Union!

"R. TOOMBS."

It was the long remembered wire that was handed to General Grant in the midst of the celebration of his return from his triumphant round the world voyage. It was reported that he merely read it and smiled. The Union chieftain probably recalled that Toombs had also been to Europe, just after the close of the war—not as a conqueror, but as a fugitive from arrest.

These ominous words of Toombs sent Watson hurrying to Stephens. The old hero was not perturbed. Pushing his roller chair back and forth, he said: "Oh, well, Watson, you must remember that Toombs sometimes talks just to hear himself talk. He loves to stir up antagonism. Were any Northern guests down there?"

Watson told him all that had occurred at the bar.

"Toombs is never so wild as when he knows a Yankee is listening. He delights in sticking pins in them." And Mr. Stephens' eyes danced merrily.

"But you don't really believe we are going to have another Civil War, do you?" asked Watson.

THE FIRST RACE

"Why, my boy, of course not," readily reassured the statesman. "This negro question will settle itself. The North will grow cold after a while and see things as they are. They will learn to know the negro. Blacks will go North and Northern whites will come South until the facts will be clear to all. Northern intelligence will eventually realize that the negro is not a white man with a black skin. The Civil War was largely the result of misunderstanding. Such a calamity will not occur again. Noble men and women throughout the North will gradually awaken to the truth, and the fashion of idealizing the negro will pass away. The North understands the race prejudice against the Indians, for they shared it. It understands a Californian's distaste for the Chinaman. In God's own time it will understand the Southern prejudice against the negro."

Watson went back home with renewed zeal to win his race. He wanted to have his name some day recorded on that illustrious roll of Georgians which bore the name of the wise and benevolent Alexander H. Stephens.

And he did win it. In the election held on October 4th he polled the by-no-means insignificant county majority of 392 votes. Tutt, of course, was elected to the Senate.

CHAPTER XIX

IN THE LEGISLATURE

MR. WATSON entered the lower house of the General Assembly of Georgia on November 1, 1882, with not a few men who were to become figures of distinction. Governor, Justice of the State Supreme Court, Judge of the Superior Court, Congressman and other high offices were to be filled at more or less remote dates by its members, not to mention other fields of prominence which it supplied. And the upper house now had a future president of the American Bar Association.

There were Charles L. Bartlett and Nat. E. Harris, of Bibb County, the former later a Superior Court Judge and then a Member of Congress, the latter Governor of Georgia; Richard B. Russell, of Clarke, who became Superior Court Judge and Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Georgia; Seaborn Wright, of Floyd, leading champion of prohibition in 1907 when Georgia pioneered the way among States against the liquor traffic; Charles R. Pendleton, of Lowndes, who, as editor of *The Macon Daily Telegraph*, became a moulder of public opinion whom Watson was to have good cause to remember; and Major Charles E. McGregor, of Warren, an incident in whose life was to enhance, more than anything else, the Watson fame as a lawyer.

The upper-house gentleman referred to was Peter W.

IN THE LEGISLATURE

Meldrim, of Savannah, who was to succeed William Howard Taft as President of the American Bar Association, and become a Superior Court Judge.

However, as regards men, the name that shed most lustre upon this General Assembly was that of Alexander Hamilton Stephens, whose inauguration as Governor of Georgia that body witnessed at the Opera House on Saturday, November 4th. The Sage of Liberty Hall, at the October polls, had been overwhelmingly elected to succeed Alfred H. Colquitt, over L. J. Gartrell, having received 107,253 votes to Gartrell's 44,896.

A host of bills were being presented daily. On November 8th, Mr. Watson introduced "A Bill to amend Section 4083 of the Code, so as to allow tenants distrained, if unable from poverty to give bond and security, to file defenses *in forma pauperis*." His object was so to amend the law of landlord and tenant that the tenant, against whose crop and equipment a distress warrant had been sworn out by the landlord to collect rent, could fight the issue out in court without having to give a bond with security in order to keep possession of the property pending litigation. As the law was, the tenant had to furnish a bond in twice the sum sued for, on which the name of a person acceptable to the levying officer appeared as security, before he could contest the right and legality of the amount claimed due. If the tenant was known to be poor, he could not get anyone to go on his bond, as such bondsman would have no protection. The Watson bill was so to change the law as to do away with the bond and permit the tenant to file his defense by way of an affidavit, denying the justice and correctness of the proceeding, *in forma*

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

pauperis; that is to say, simply by swearing therein that he was too poor to furnish bond and security. Thus all tenants, whatever their worldly condition, would be able to go to court with the landlord.

The general judiciary committee, to which the bill was referred by the Speaker, reported it out with a recommendation that it "do pass," on November 23rd, and two days later it was read the second time. However, the measure did not pass, the last record of it being on the 13th of the following July session, when it was recommended to the committee. It was twelve years later, in the 1894 Legislature, that the law was changed along the line Mr. Watson had tried to do, when a bill was passed providing that, when the officer levying the distress warrant took possession of the tenant's property, the tenant did not have to give a bond.

On November 9th, the General Assembly convened in joint session in the hall of the House to elect Superior Court Judges and Solicitors-General for new terms and to fill vacancies. The body was of considerable size, there being 44 Senators and 174 Representatives from the 130 Georgia counties. James S. Boynton, President of the Senate, took the chair.

One of the judgeships to be filled was that of the Augusta Circuit for the next term of four years beginning January 1, 1883, and now held by Judge Snead. Senator George nominated M. P. Carroll, of Augusta. Mr. Wright, of Washington, nominated John T. Shumake, of Augusta. Senator Tutt presented the name of Henry C. Roney, of Thomson.

It was a common maneuver of the day for a man to get

IN THE LEGISLATURE

elected to the Legislature solely for the purpose of "politicking" for the judgeship or solicitor-generalship, these offices being then filled by elections in the Legislature, instead of by popular vote, the method today. It made a man run two races—one for the Legislature and one in the Legislature—but if he succeeded in being elected to that body, he had virtually whipped the fight. The situation was similar to that in the United States Senate, where "courtesy" to a member insures or prevents the confirmation of a Presidential appointee, according to the wish of said member. It got to be common talk when a lawyer offered for the Legislature that he had a legal job in view.

Wherefore, Mr. Roney, former legislator, was elected by a most definite majority, Mr. Watson voting for him as he had promised to do, if the people wanted him. The election met with general approval, the gentleman chosen being in every sense fitted for the office.

There were reports that Snead was disappointed at Watson's failure to offer his name for re-election. Years later, remarks coming from him indicated that he did not feel that he had been rightly dealt with, though he made no open statements, remembering that his withdrawal of the prosecution of Watson in the Tutt matter had placed him in an embarrassing position. However, Mr. Watson was open to any questioning on the subject, maintaining that his course was directed by the position of his constituents, and rightly could have been no other.

His mind still being on the poor, the halt and the maimed, Mr. Watson's next bill was one "to amend Section 534 of the Code, so as to allow disabled soldiers to

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

peddle sewing machines." Its object was to exempt such soldiers from paying a tax. It was reported adversely by the committee on finance, to which, on motion of its author when it was taken up for a second reading, it was recommitted. As Confederate veterans already had the legal right to peddle anything they chose, except intoxicating liquors, without paying a license, the bill appears to have been unnecessary. It was not taken up again though its author achieved its purpose by securing passage of his amendment to the general tax act, providing that the tax on sewing machine agents should not apply to maimed Confederate soldiers, after it had been further amended to provide that such ex-soldiers peddled the machines in their own right and not as the agent of another.

On November 13th, Governor Stephens communicated official notification to the General Assembly of the death on August 16, 1882, of United States Senator Benjamin Harvey Hill, and of its duty to fill the vacancy for his unexpired term, ending March 4, 1883. On the 15th both Houses convened jointly to elect to fill such unexpired term, and also to elect to fill the succeeding full term of six years. Pursuant to law, one ballot already had been taken in each House in each election, resulting in no one receiving a majority in either.

The nominees for the unexpired term were Benjamin H. Hill, Jr., of Atlanta, and Pope Barrow, of Athens. The nominees for the full term were former Governor Alfred H. Colquitt, James Jackson, Attorney-General Clifford Anderson and Major J. C. C. Black, of Augusta, of whom we shall have considerable occasion to speak further on.

IN THE LEGISLATURE

The joint election for the unexpired term resulted in bestowal of the toga for its few remaining months upon Barrow.

For the full term Watson was supporting Black for all he was worth. In seconding Black's nomination by W. T. Gary, of Richmond, Watson had likened the brilliant Augustan to "the redoubtable and chivalrous Henry of Navarre." His characterization of this same gentleman a decade later was in quite different terms. But then the situation was different. However, Black came third in the balloting, Colquitt, object of former Watson anathemas, being elected with 123 of the 216 votes cast.

Henry W. Grady, editor of *The Atlanta Constitution*, in which he was rightly preaching the gospel of good will between the South and North, though acting, at the same time, the role of most astute politician, had backed Colquitt, and it was due to his influence more than to that of anyone else that he was elected; though Governor Colquitt, a man of magnificent powers and presence, had a large and loyal following on his own account.

The brilliant editor liked to entertain for two reasons. In the first place, he was of an hospitable disposition. In the second, he was amply supplied with the means of merriment as they were counted in his day, and he was in no wise inclined to hold them back.

Forth, then, to his mansion on Peachtree Street to celebrate the Colquitt victory must come those most worthy to celebrate it in virtue of some prominent labor performed. And no difficulty was experienced in said foregathering, for the excellence of the Grady cellar was a matter of common repute.

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

The editor advertised, only in the few formal invitations extended, of course, that there would be feeding at 6 and fiddling at 9. Those invited were the candidates, the gentlemen who nominated them, those who seconded the nominations and certain other eligibles. Among others, this brought out Messrs. Rankin, who nominated Colquitt; DuPree, who nominated Jackson; Harris, who nominated Anderson; Gary, the nominator of Black; and, of course, Watson, who had seconded Black's nomination, as well as his boarding house companion, Dick Russell, who did the same thing for Jackson. And the gentleman from Lowndes, Mr. Pendleton, was on hand.

The entertainment was composed, in no mean part, of a certain sparkling and highly synthesized fluid of great potency, known as Mumm's Extra Dry—or, less pedantically, champagne. It was after considerable participation thereof and thereat, that Mr. Grady stepped to the center of the floor, and, with his boyish shake of the head when simulating a dignity that did not go with the occasion, announced that music was just without. In walked Watson, Pendleton, Beck, of Lumpkin, and Shipp, of Chattahoochee, with fiddles, which the host hastened to assure the company were genuine Stradivarius, a claim this author would not even attempt to verify. However, the company was now ready to believe anything, as was the host.

Mr. Grady announced a contest on between the gentleman from McDuffie and the gentleman from Lowndes. Strange method here of matching powers, to be in future matched in a far different manner.

So they fiddled—and drank; which meant that they kept

IN THE LEGISLATURE

on fiddling. The effect of the extra dry was to make Watson and Pendleton intensely serious. To them this was a test of valor, a fight to the death. Each swore that if the crowd would wait long enough he would fiddle the other down. This made for excitement. But that, even under the circumstances, began to wane after a while and the valorous two were stopped by a gathering of politicians which declared it knew when it had had enough—whether it knew it or not.

Mr. Grady was determined to finish off the affair. There had to be a winner. If there wasn't one, he would make one, for he had the prize. There it was, the center piece of the dining table, where all had seen it during the banquet—"a floral fiddle, with tube-rose body and smilax springs."

It is not known what division of opinion there was as to the prowess of the respective contenders—if there was any. At any rate the floral fiddle was sent to Mrs. Georgia Watson, Thomson, Ga., "as a testimonial of her husband's talent."

Mr. Watson had gone to the Legislature with the avowed purpose of reforming the State's system of penology. In his campaign he had promised the voters that he would use his effort toward abolishing the procedure of the State's leasing out its prisoners to private concerns. He had been so constrained to do because of the many instances of cruelty to convicts in camps throughout the State maintained by private corporations, such as railroads and lumber companies. His position, little agitated before, won him votes throughout his county,

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

and was the cause of his being endorsed by the negro voters, who, because of the predominance of their race among convicts, were mainly interested.

✓ He began a fight in the House on November 17th to abolish the convict lease system, approaching the reform not by a bill to abolish the system, which he knew could not be passed at the time, but by "a resolution requiring the Committee on the Penitentiary to make certain inquiries as to the treatment of convicts and to report thereon," which was agreed to. He wanted at least to sow the seed of a complete reform.

There were various bills introduced at this session relating to convicts, such as the one by Mr. Harris, of Bibb, to provide for the punishment of convicts in the county chain-gangs; but none to abolish the hiring out of convicts to private concerns. So intrenched was private gain on this question at this time, that no attempt was made to legislate a complete change of the system.

Mr. Watson supported all the measures looking to reform, and declared on the floor of the House, in presenting his own, that he "advocated the abolition of the convict lease system, which commercialized the State's sovereign right to punish and reform her criminals to money-making companies whose only interest was to maintain the convict at the lowest possible cost and to work him at the utmost human capacity." He went on to speak of the "very atrocious crimes committed against the convicts by the whipping bosses of these lessee companies."

The system was to let out the convicts to the highest bidder, the income to the State being usually \$100 per year per convict, the company paying all expenses of

IN THE LEGISLATURE

maintenance and medical treatment, and the State furnishing the guards.

Various changes in the law followed from year to year giving the State Prison Commission more and more control of leased prisoners, but it was not until some twenty-five years after Mr. Watson's effort was made that the system was completely overthrown, and the convicts put on the public roads under entire control of the State.

On adjournment taken for the week-end on the day Mr. Watson offered the resolution just quoted, he went home to be with his dear wife. On Sunday, November 19th, she gave birth to their second child, who was named Agnes Pearce Watson. He returned to the Legislature the next Tuesday.

Pursuant to a joint resolution passed upon notification from Governor Stephens that Hon. George Hillyer, Judge of the Superior Courts of the Atlanta Circuit, had resigned, the Senate and House met in the hall of the latter on November 28th to elect a successor for the unexpired term ending January 1, 1885.

This incident is of pertinent interest, in virtue of the fact that the subject of this biography took part in the election of the successor of a man who, though hale and hearty at an advanced age as this account is being written, came in important contact with the only Vice-President of the Southern Confederacy and with one of the three greatest Presidents of the United States.

It was before Judge Hillyer, a few years before his

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

resignation was handed to Governor Stephens, that Woodrow Wilson was admitted to the bar of Georgia in the Superior Court of Fulton County.

Three Atlanta lawyers were nominated to succeed Judge Hillyer—R. L. Rodgers, Marshall J. Clarke, and William R. Hammond. Hammond, whom Watson supported, was elected.

There was another thing Mr. Watson had said he would try to do in the Legislature. It will be recalled that in the days of 1874-5 he took up the cause of the temperance committee that used to hold forth at Little Horse Creek Church, in Screven County, where he taught school. He fought the traffic in liquor with the zeal of the true reformer, and these speeches of his youthhood had been talked of and remembered. It was believed that there was not a man in Georgia who was a more fearless foe of the liquor interests. It was known throughout the State, as well as in the hall of the House of Representatives, that Tom Watson was neither afraid of nor approachable by the liquor lobby hanging around its doors.

Session after session there had been introduced local bills to relieve the obnoxious situation. Respectable people in virtually every county had been confronted with the spectacle of grogeries near their homes—headquarters of drunkenness and vice; and God-fearing citizens could hardly assemble at country churches to worship without being confronted with the liquor evil, either in the form of an adjacent saloon or of drunken men at church.

Hence there had been a flood of relief-seeking bills offered—such as a bill to regulate or prevent the sale of intoxicating liquors in such-and-such a county; a bill to

IN THE LEGISLATURE

fix the liquor license in a particular county at \$10,000; a bill to prohibit the sale of liquor near Rehoboth Church in Wilkes County; a bill making it illegal to carry intoxicating liquors to or near any place of worship; and a bill to submit the liquor question to the voters of a particular county.

Such laws had been passed and many like them were before the present Legislature. It was seen that the demand for strict regulation came from so many quarters that the best thing that could be done was to pass a law giving each county the power to say whether liquor should be sold therein.

On November 15th Frank P. Griffith, of Oconee, introduced a general local option bill. It was read and referred to the committee on temperance, of which C. R. Pringle, of Washington, was chairman. On the first day of the July 1883 session, F. A. Irwin, of Cobb, introduced a bill to submit the question of prohibition to the several counties. The measures went their devious courses of being worked on and remodeled by amendments and substitutes; and the committee eventually reported favorably a general local option bill. Three hundred copies of the committee's substitute measure were printed for House members and it was several times re-committed. A bitter fight developed.

Mr. Watson was chosen by Chairman Pringle to make the speech in reply to the enemies of the bill when the debate came on. He rose to the occasion with all his fiery brilliance in a 20-minute speech. He held up the high morality of the measure; and he did not refrain from the use of some sarcasm—referring to Mr. Falligant, of

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

Savannah, where liquor was like an intrenched fortress, as "the flute-like orator from Chatham."

On August 7, 1883, the general local option bill giving each district, incorporated town, city or county of the State the right to say whether liquor should be sold in it, passed the House. It failed of passage in the Senate; but the Legislature of 1885 passed the measure, which really had its birth in that of 1882-3, with the change that it applied only to counties. This law, approved by the Governor on September 18, 1885, with the local laws that had preceded it, put the "sale, barter for valuable consideration, directly or indirectly, or the giving away to induce trade at any place of business, or the furnishing at other public places any alcoholic, spirituous, malt or intoxicating liquors, or intoxicating bitters, or other drinks which, if drunk to excess, will produce intoxication" out of 117 Georgia counties. Violation of the law was made a misdemeanor. It was the forerunner of State-wide prohibition enacted in 1907.

Just what Mr. Watson thought of the local option law may be gathered from a letter he wrote many years later to the author of this biography, in which he said:

"That law, resting upon the public sentiment of the counties which adopted it, was more successful than the present Volstead Act, which has given rise to more illicit distilleries and more poisoned whiskey than were ever before known in Georgia."

On the last day of the 1882 session, October 8th, Mr. Watson was appointed by Speaker Louis F. Garrard, of Muscogee, on the committee of 65 from the House to

IN THE LEGISLATURE

attend the Sesqui-Centennial Celebration of the Landing of General James Edward Oglethorpe at Savannah in 1733, to be held in that city on February 12, 1883. It was now 150 years since the founder of the Thirteenth Original Colony landed on the soil which became the State of Georgia. There were Charley McGregor, Dick Russell, Charley Pendleton and others of Watson's close friends name on the committee.

Governor Stephens from his roller chair, over the advice of his physician and closest friends, announced his determination to go, for he was scheduled for a speech. It was the last he ever made. The trip was too much for the grand old statesman. He was forced to take his bed immediately upon his return. After an illness of two weeks, on March 4, 1883, he died at the age of 71 years, remarkable for a man who had always been an invalid and, with it all, had been in the very maelstrom of the South's most troublous days.

While away on the Oglethorpe event, Mr. Watson employed much of his time making an investigation of the early days of his wife, but his efforts were mainly fruitless. When he returned home he reported that it was impossible, after such a lapse of time, to verify many of the details of Dr. Durham's account of the child, Georgia, and he resigned himself to the most meager knowledge of her history.

On May 9th the Legislature was convened in extra session by the Hon. James S. Boynton, former President of the Senate, who automatically became Governor upon Mr. Stephens' death, for the purpose of declaring the result of a special election for Governor he had ordered held on

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

April 24th to fill the unexpired term; or, in case no person received a majority of the votes cast thereat, to elect a Governor for such term.

The specially convened session did not have to perform the latter task, as a consolidation of the vote revealed that only 24,014 votes were cast and that all but 334 of them were polled for the Hon. Henry D. McDaniel, who was now declared duly elected Governor of Georgia for the unexpired Stephens term.

Georgia's great Civil War sons were passing away. Two years, to the day, before the death of United States Senator Benjamin H. Hill on August 16, 1882, Herschel V. Johnson died; and now on the very day Senator Hill's term in the national Congress ended, though he did not live to finish it, Alexander H. Stephens breathed his last.

It was indeed meet that memorials should be prepared for each, and on the first day of the called session the Speaker appointed three committees on behalf of the House to do so. Mr. Watson was named on the committee to prepare a memorial on Senator Benjamin H. Hill. His colleagues were Messrs. Humber, Falligant, Gary and Beck. The reports were to be made at the ensuing regular session which would convene in July.

Before they were made, other committees were appointed to procure oil paintings of each of these distinguished men to be hung upon the walls of the State Capitol, where they may be seen today.

The July session began on the 4th. Mr. Watson introduced a bill to impose a tax on dogs. His purpose was to provide relief for growers of sheep who were complaining of great losses among their flocks from vicious canine.

IN THE LEGISLATURE

The speech Mr. Watson made in support of this measure created as much comment in the newspapers, probably, as any he delivered in the Legislature. After paying a flowery and poetical tribute to the dog as one of man's greatest friends, to avoid the hostility of dog-loving members, he concluded by declaring: "But nobody wants a flea-bitten, bench-legged hound around eating up sheep." The committee which got the bill proposed a substitute embodying certain changes, and, on Mr. Watson's motion, 300 copies of this were printed for House members; but the bill was lost.

On July 14th the memorial ceremonies in honor of Alexander H. Stephens were held. Mr. Harris, of Bibb, chairman of the joint committee on the part of the House, submitted the report, delivering a eulogy of "the great lawyer, orator, statesman and historian," which was duly adopted. The way was now open for individual tributes. As the one delivered by Thomas E. Watson was more widely printed in the press than any other, and more highly praised, and as it forms one of his most eloquent effusions, it is reproduced here:

Mr. Speaker: Some time since at Savannah, we were shown the monument which the noble women of the South had erected in memory of its noble men. Upon its summit, typical of the sorrow of his people, stands the figure of a Confederate soldier, his head bowed and his finger upon his lips.

Sir, we have listened to eulogies by members from every section of the State. I came almost from Mr. Stephens' own fireside, and reverent, indeed, should be the hands that bring the tribute from his home, for I know that the feelings of his people were best shown, after the manner

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

of the soldier upon the monument, by the finger upon the lips and the teardrop in the eyes.

I shall not attempt any labored eulogy of him. The one fitness I have for such a task is the love in which I held him. Reared as I was at his feet, taught to honor him from my earliest childhood, the years but deepened my respect and intimacy, my affection. During these ceremonies today I have felt like that friend of the great Webster who followed him to the grave and who, when the soil had covered the form that was so grand to him, turned away and said: "The whole world seems lonesome to-day."

"The morning yet has its birth,
The rainbow comes and goes,
And lovely is the rose;
But yet I know
Where'er I go
There's a glory passed away from earth."

In Southern history there has been no completer character than his. Do we look for truth and honor? No falsehood ever soiled the purity of those proud lips, and through the vices of life he had walked with robes that gathered no stain. Do we look for heroism? It is brave to combat the prejudices of our own people. He had done so. It is brave to side with the weak, the oppressed, the friendless. He had done so.

With body frail by nature, and racked by disease, with spirit tortured by poverty, he had dared the frown of Fate, and had dashed down the difficulties in his path with as true a heroism as ever faced a bayonet. Some of the sweetest flowers blossom at night. In the night-time of pain and disease no fairer flowers ever bloomed than the patient heroism that bore his own ills and the tender pity that shared the ills of others.

Do we look for charity? When he shall meet his fellow man before the great White Throne, out of all earth's

IN THE LEGISLATURE

hosts there will come no accuser to say: "I was anhungered, and ye gave me no meat; thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick and in prison, and ye visited me not."

He was happy in that time was given him to complete his work. I am sorry for the man who must leave the course ere the race is run. With Mr. Stephens the contest was over. He had gone out in the serried ranks of life; he had borne him like a true knight, without fear and without reproach. But the struggle has been finished. The great Commander has sounded the recall, and this veteran was on his return, with the laurel upon his brow, the olive leaf in his hand, victory upon his head, and peace in his heart. He had gone out into the grain fields of life. He had reaped in the freshness of morning, in the heat of midday, and amid the slanting rays of the afternoon; but as evening came on, the old man's hand had grown feeble and tired, and he was coming home, his arms full of golden sheaves. The Master, coming, found him ready, his house in order. Never was the silver cord more gently loosed. Never was the golden bowl more softly broken. He fell on sleep like a child weary and worn. Great Nature, the common mother, holds him tenderly to her bosom. When he shall awaken, it is inspiring to believe that he shall greet the morning in a land where there is no night, where the skies are undimmed by a cloud, where the feet bleed upon no pathway of stones, and the head wears no crown of thorns.

And it probably was meet that Watson should pay the most notable tribute; for in March, during the adjourned period, he had gone to Atlanta from Thomson for a last visit to the Sage of Liberty Hall. He and Dan W. Rountree, of Brooks, were in the Governor's room at the Kimball House not long before the last struggle for life came, trying to give him hope of weathering the fatal

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

trip to Savannah. Sinking in his weakness, the dying statesman barely could be heard to say: "Well, I guess I got through pretty well."

The summer session of 1883 went on, seemingly without much accomplishment or an end in sight. Mr. Watson expressed himself very freely on the situation, declaring that if the Legislature was not going to do anything, or if it had nothing to do, the members ought to go home and quit spending the State's money. Their per diem was \$4. This Legislature had been in session much of the time since it first convened. More than a month in 1882, a part of May, the hot months of July and August and a portion of September 1883 had been consumed, and Watson saw no necessity for it.

He had begun to raise objection "to the useless hanging on" in the latter part of August. His patience finally exhausted, Watson got the floor on a point of personal privilege, and delivered an excoriating rebuke to the members of the House. Raising his voice to a high pitch, to the marveling of some and merriment of others, he threatened:

"I'll give you three more weeks to make up your mind to leave here; and if you haven't done it by that time, I'm going home!"

And so he did, instructing his room-mate, the gentleman from Clarke, to collect and send him the balance of his per diem.

Wherefore, when the Ben Hill memorial ceremonies were held on the night of September 24th, Watson was not

IN THE LEGISLATURE

there to join his colleagues of the committee and others in paying tribute.

In truth he had departed in that high state of disgust comparable only to that of Bob Toombs concerning the same session. The General was wont to entertain members from his county at home on visits. At this time, as was also his wont, he had partaken freely of his favorite brand of whiskey shipped from Augusta. A guest started a conversation on the doings of the Legislature. Toombs cleared up his throat.

"Hasn't that damned Legislature adjourned yet?" he bellowed.

"No, General."

"Send for Cromwell!"

However, that august body did adjourn, *sine die*, on September 26th. The most important work it had carried to completion was the passage of the bill by Representative F. P. Rice, of Fulton, to build a new State Capitol, which Mr. Watson supported. The structure was erected on a square opposite the house where he had boarded.

CHAPTER XX

A LITERARY ADDRESS FOR MERCER—AND FOR THE WORLD

THE law now engaged Mr. Watson's undivided attention for several years. His reputation was taking him to county after county, and especially in criminal cases where there was high feeling he was employed; for the peculiar Watson ability—where he excelled—was in turning an unfavorable tide of public sentiment into a favorable one.

This was particularly illustrated in the Jack Peavy case in Warren Superior Court in October 1883. Peavy, it was charged, got on the train at Barnett drunk and boisterous. He was considered a vagabond and a desperado. The conductor, one Irvin, collared and ejected him from the train. Peavy tried to shoot the conductor, was in turn shot by the latter, and, after an escape, was located in his own field by a constable and posse and arrested after being wounded by seventeen buckshot. Taken to Warrenton, he was tried for assault with intent to murder. Sentiment was high against him.

Appealed to by the young man's wife, who had fled with her little children to him for protection and aid, Judge N. A. Wicker engaged Watson to defend Peavy.

Picturing the way-faring man as an Ishmael, Watson put his full power into his argument to produce the view that he was not a desperado. The result was first a mistrial, then an acquittal.

A LITERARY ADDRESS

At the May term, 1885, of Jefferson Superior Court (Louisville, Georgia) Mr. Watson appeared in one of the most dramatic cases of his entire career, that of Elvira Ivey, a beautiful 20-year-old adventuress, indicted for the murder of Jackson McCauley, a married man, and her alleged lover. McCauley was shot to death with a shot-gun as he approached her bedroom window late at night.

The unusual case as built up by the state's evidence was that McCauley had left his wife and two children because of an infatuation for Miss Ivey, and approached her window on the night of the killing in response to a letter from her, promising to go away with him. The text of this letter appeared in the newspapers. It had been delivered by hand and bore no name, the woman denying she wrote it. Testimony by persons claiming to know her handwriting was convincing that she did.

Mr. Watson was engaged to prosecute the young woman. The Solicitor-General being ill, he prepared the case for the grand jury, W. L. Phillips acting as Solicitor-General pro tem.

On the trial there appeared by the defense, as chief counsel, the inevitable and brilliant W. D. Tutt, with whom were associated Messrs. Cain & Polhill and Gamble & Hunter.

The defense offered nothing but Miss Ivey's statement which was, in brief, that about 2 o'clock on the night of the killing she was awakened by a knocking at her window; that on demanding who it was, a man's voice commanded her to get up and go with him; that if she consented he would give her \$1500, but if she refused he "would blow

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

her brains out"; that she handed the man a box of clothes, then seized a shot-gun and fired out the window without aim and without knowing who was there.

Mr. Watson had entire control of shaping the state's case. It was that the young woman lured McCauley to her window, in conspiracy with her people to rob him, knowing he was to have \$1500 on his person, with which to elope, having promised to secure a divorce from his wife and marry her; that this plot was borne out by the circumstances of a late hour at night; a secluded place; failure of a fierce watch-dog to make any noise, indicating that he had been taken into the house; and failure of the old-fashioned hammer shot-gun to be heard when cocked, indicating it had been cocked in advance.

Watson put all his power into his 2-hour argument delivered in a crowded courtroom at midnight, endeavoring to break the force of the fact that the defendant was a woman, the crux of which was:

"They claim a woman commits no such crime. Examples are to the contrary. In Georgia there were Kate Sothern and Susan Eberhart. In history, Lucretia Borgia, Fredegonda, Brunehilda, Jezebel, Beatrice Cenci."

Tutt concluded, but Miss Ivey was convicted of voluntary manslaughter, and Judge Carswell sentenced her to serve five years in the penitentiary. She later secured a new trial. Letters that had been interchanged between her and McCauley had aroused in Mr. Watson a sympathy for her. He did not appear against her in the second trial and she was acquitted, married a respectable farmer and never gained any more notoriety.

A LITERARY ADDRESS

In her statement to the jury she had accused one Solomon Jones of seducing her before she met McCauley. For this alleged offense Jones was indicted in Warren County and in his case Watson, with James Whitehead, appeared for the defense, and Tutt, Joseph Pottle and Solicitor-General Howard for the state. Jones was acquitted.

In July Mr. Watson took a trip to New York by steamer from Savannah, to rejuvenate his overtaxed energies. The trip included all of the most important places, then as today considered indispensable to a New York tour: up the Hudson, Chinatown, Coney Island, Manhattan Beach, Central Park, and the others. He returned loving yet more dearly his own home in a Georgia country town.

His law practice, running the full course of civil and criminal practice, the former involving wills, title to lands, damages, and promissory notes, and the latter now being confined mostly to murder cases, was bringing Watson rich returns. These he was by no means allowing to slip his grasp, but was investing them in rich farm lands that were to be the backbone of his eventual estate of comfortable proportions.

In June 1886 the main halls of old Mercer again rang with the eloquence of its most noted son, who, not yet 30 years old and out of college little more than a decade, was invited to deliver the commencement literary address. The author is fully justified in reprinting a goodly portion of this deliverance, for it illustrates the rapid development of the Watson mind and oratory, marked now for its logic as well as eloquence:

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

There is a spirit abroad which is born of suspicion, and nurtured by levity and cynicism. Its watchword is incredulity; its process, prejudiced inquiry; its result, skepticism. It sneers at devotion to duty, mocks at pretensions to the virtues, scouts the existence of any motives of action save the maxims of a narrow, unsympathizing selfishness. Its pleasure is to cast ridicule upon old accepted creeds; its pride of opinion flatters itself by the rejection of current beliefs; its levity harbors no respect for character, however exalted—for motive, be it never so pure; and no reverence for anything past or present, human or divine. Its disposition is unscrupulous and aggressive and malignant. Like the vulture, its circling search is for corruption; like the hyena, it digs up and devours what decency would hide and forget.

Ask of these thoughtful instructors what it is that disturbs them most in the contemplation of our future and I doubt not the answer will be that it is the spread of the empire of disbelief—an empire which preserves no temples sacred from attack—which has no Pillars of Hercules to mark the limit beyond which its vessels dare not sail.

I am not speaking of that skepticism which merely says, "I wish to fairly investigate and intelligently decide"—that skepticism which stops the approach of every creed or dogma, however ancient and revered, and claims the right to examine its passports ere it be permitted to cross the frontiers of belief. Such skepticism is worthy of all the praise and the world is in its debt. Such skepticism broke the spell of old barbaric creeds and gave us intellectual growth, political freedom—shattered the chains of superstition and gave to a higher civilization the blessings of religious liberty. All honor to such skeptics. Philosophy claims them in Galileo and Newton; statesmanship in Mirabeau and Burke and Jefferson—religion in Luther and Calvin and Knox.

The skeptic I do mean is he who has run this habit of candid research into the abuse of indiscriminate dis-

A LITERARY ADDRESS

belief. Who doubts because he thinks it displays great knowledge of the world and great mental superiority to doubt. Who doubts because he hears others doubt, because it is the fashion to doubt. Those who believe everything, he considers to be fools—and he drifts among those who believe nothing—forgetting that they may be still bigger fools. Green being the color of the glasses he wears—all that he sees is green. He detects the mote in the eye without ever beholding the eye. The sun to him is all spots and eclipse—not a blazing light that leads the march of the universe. You'll hear his voice wherever you go. The history of the country is rife with his slanders and suspicions; its literature spoiled by his satires and his ribaldry, his immoralities; the very music of the land—white-winged bird of paradise that it is—desecrated and debased by the burden of his obscenities, his endless and shameless unbelief.

Accept the logic of the position. Admit that honor's a myth, truth a dream, friendship a deception, love a sensuality and it does seem to me that the Evil Spirit of the world could but whisper in your ear his old-time advice "Curse God and die." And the sooner a believer in such a creed accepted the latter part of the advice, the better it would be for the rest of us. The belief is a faithful mirror to those who embrace it—to the men who believe evilly because too often they seek an evil creed to fit an evil life. They get an idea that the world is a sea where the big fish eat the little fish and that the only way to escape being devoured is to devour all others, and grasping, therefore they must snatch. All others cheat, therefore they must swindle. And thus you see how scoundrels may be manufactured out of the plain principles of self-defense. Their motto is the phrase which Dickens puts into the mouth of Jonas Chuzzlewit: "Do others for they would do you." Appropriate mottos from an appropriate source—a wretch who poisoned his father, broke the heart of his wife, lived in rascality, died in suicide. Give

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

us the man who denies integrity and proclaims all men dishonest, and we have a knave who, if you give him half a chance, will steal the gold plugs out of your teeth. Give us the man who says all men are liars and we have a Munchausen who never tells the truth except when it is necessary to give his tongue a rest from the monotony of lying.

What right have such creatures to infect the air we breathe and sit in judgment upon better men? Listen to the evidence of the drunkard and all men are tipsy—to the libertine, putrid and foul and false, who never made a vow he didn't break, never received a trust he didn't betray—listen to him and the spotless robe of purity which womanhood wears and the angels might envy, lives only in the dream of youth, colors only the page of romance.

Such is the skeptic's creed. It has its followers everywhere who talk it, write it, live it. I have met them—you have met them. Listening to them we doubt friends, distrust the family circle—lose faith in the possibilities of life. This creed I deny—this creed I scorn. This creed, had I the power, I would stamp out from the face of the earth as I would the reptile that endangers our path.

What shall we believe? Weightier question will never strike your ear. Beliefs are the germs of principles; principles are the elements of manhood; and manhood, true, exalted manhood, is the summit of praise-worthy ambition. To constitute the highest type of manhood, we all agree that certain qualities are requisite; among them kindness, truth, honor, loyalty.

But do they exist? The skeptic says no, and listening to him we doubt where he doubts, reject what he rejects and turn deaf ear to the call of our better nature.

Come! it's a grave matter. Comrades, let us examine it. Not in a spirit of levity. God forbid! The Cæsar whom history shows you standing yonder at the Rubicon—march halted, legions silent, ponders upon a question no more serious to him than is this to you.

A LITERARY ADDRESS

Is there no kindness? Look over all this globe and count if you can its aids to distress, its institutions of charity. Count the hospitals, the asylums, the orphanages, the homes for aged, infirm and needy. Trace them in city and town and country, on mountain and plain and desert; in zones frigid and temperate and torrid. Note the missions and the free schools. See every government with its poor laws; every country with its pauper fund. See the very criminals jealously guarded from cruelty and want. How many nooks will you find where benevolence has not brought the charm of her presence—how many houses of mourning where she has not soothed aching heads and aching hearts—how many desert wastes where she has not planted and tended and nourished till barrenness blossomed into fruitfulness and beauty?

Kindness? Why its spirit is all-pervading and masterful. It melts the barriers of sectional coldness, ignores difference of race and color and condition; it overleaps the obstacle of distance and spans oceans and seas with its magic bridges. We read of the Federal soldier pensioned by a bountiful Government and not needing the pension, who seeks out some destitute and disabled Confederate and gives it to him. God pity them that they are so easy to find all through the Southland! . . .

Is there no truth? You know the Psalmist exclaimed, "I said in my haste that all men are liars"; and you remember the good brother who added, "Yes, and if David had taken all his life to think about it he would have reached the same conclusion." In one sense of the word I suppose we all do lie. For instance, you tell me you are sorry to hear that I have been sick, when the truth is you don't care any more about my health than you do about the fate of a last year's May-pop.

I am sitting in my room on Sunday; have done a hard week's work and now I'm going to have a quiet, restful day at home—stretched on a lounge with a book in my hand. All at once a buggy drives up and stops at my

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

gate. There's Jones and Jones' wife, who is as full of weak conversation as the church is of weak members; and Jones' baby, which is teething and giving its attention to the development of a fine pair of lungs. The whole concern has come to spend the day! Merciful heavens! Seeing them coming in I grow faint and desperate and suicidal. I form wild notions of jumping over the back fence and taking to the woods. Too late. The door bell rings, and I sadly lay aside book and go to meet them. See me do it. "Why, Jones, old fellow, how d'ye do; and the Madam and the baby. Come in; come in—rejoiced to see you." And such a smile as I do get up. Well, now since I think of it, I am not so sure about the smiling business. If I am not a candidate for anything I am not so sure that I smile. If I am, I am quite sure that I do. For when I'm a candidate I am like the balance of them and I have a lovely, heart-searching, vote-lifting smile that my friends say is enough to melt the horns off a billy goat.

The reporter for the "society column" alludes to his lady friend as the "beautiful and accomplished" when he knows that her face is a howling wilderness of bone and freckles and things and that her mind is as empty as a politician's promise.

We members of the bar have to examine applicants for admission. We ask them certain questions as to the law and they answer or don't answer, as the case may be, and we rise, address the Judge and say: "We are satisfied, your Honor." Sometimes we are called upon to examine one of these fellows who miss about four-thirds of all the questions we ask. Still we use the formula: "We are satisfied," and thus we let in another lawyer to ornament and bless mankind. And so we are satisfied—satisfied that he doesn't know the difference between a conditional estate and a gatling gun, satisfied that what he thinks he knows would stall a freight train on a down

A LITERARY ADDRESS

grade and what he does know wouldn't embarrass the retreat of a wounded mosquito. . . .

But what Republican would be so blind in hatred as to deny honesty to Stephens and Toombs, Lamar and Davis? On the other hand what Democrat would feel that he did justice to the candor of his nature if he did not bear testimony to the worth of Lincoln and Sumner, Conkling and Phelps? Their names are synonyms of integrity—their records without stain. And when we see honesty so conspicuous that even among the politicians its presence is unquestioned, we feel as we do when we see the lilies lifting white faces from puddles, or violets shrinking amid bramble—we feel that the seeds of beauty have been so bountifully scattered by the hands of a gracious Providence that they bloom in spite of obstacles. . . .

O comrade! Be earnest and brave and true! Leave trifling to those who have no aim—levity to those who have no faith. Be deaf to those who would wound you by their ridicule and jeers. Remember that the mockery was heard even while the sands drank the life blood of the martyr—while Calvary grew black in the death hour of a God. Be a man! Soiled by no bribe, daunted by no danger, cowed by no defeat and as sure as Jehovah lives and rules you will rank among those who give to this life of ours all of its sweetness, its glory and its joy!

CHAPTER XXI

THE ENLARGING ARENA

IN the latter '80's Democracy in the South, viewed purely from the political standpoint, was not nearly so firmly intrenched as it is today. Then there were Republicans and Republican influence enough, as hang-overs from Reconstruction, to make candidates, regardless of the style of ticket or party, get out and hustle among the voters. The "walk-over" the Democratic Party now has in Georgia was not so assured then.

Wherefore when the Grover Cleveland-Allen G. Thurman ticket was launched by the Democrats against the Benjamin Harrison-Levi P. Morton ticket of the Republicans in 1888, Georgia's leading sons of politics felt constrained to take the stump, to see that Democracy was saved in their State.

At the political convention on August 8th, Watson and John Temple Graves, of Rome, were named Presidential electors-at-large for Georgia. The main reason for this was the desire of the political managers of the State to get first-class speakers out to line the voters up. Both of the men chosen were noted platform orators, and it was planned for them to tour as many sections of the State as possible. Dubbed as the "little giants" of the campaign (Watson weighed 127 pounds and Graves 120), the pair were to meet at mass meetings, fairs and general public

THE ENLARGING ARENA

gatherings. Watson met all the engagements for which he was scheduled, but Graves was prevented a number of times from doing so.

Watson opened at Lincolnton, then spoke at Thomson, Appling, Warrenton and Crawfordville. These were country-county towns, and virtually all the voters were farmers.

At Savannah he was given an ovation by the Young Men's Democratic Club at the old Metropolitan Hall. A telegram to Chairman DuBignon advised that a railroad accident prevented the presence of Mr. Graves. He then introduced Watson, declaring:

"In a State singularly endowed with gifted statesmen, Middle Georgia is preëminent; and no man's promise is fairer than that of the distinguished gentleman from McDuffie."

"Far removed from the tug and turmoil of the political conflict as we are," the gentleman from McDuffie began, "yet we gain an occasional glimpse of Mr. James G. Blaine enacting the original rôle of a bull in a china shop. Then we catch a view of Mr. Harrison, the grandson of his grandfather, who encounters two difficulties. First he is smothered by his grandfather's hat, and next he is lost in the folds of Mr. Blaine's voluminous coat tails."

The success of this Watson effort stands out prominently in his political career, for the huge crowd that heard him went away singing his praises.

What is beside the point, but just as significant, was the fact that he availed himself of the opportunity to pay a courtly tribute to his wife.

"A stronger bond than friendship for its fine men that

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

binds me to Savannah is that it sheltered the childhood of my wife, the dear lady whose love is the silver thread that brightens the complex fabric of my life, whose voice is the sweetest music I ever listened to, and whose companionship is the sunlight that sheds happiness about my hearthstone."

The fact that the Democratic ticket lost did not prevent the rapidly rising politician from securing a fine introduction of state-wide scope that meant much in the ensuing years. It was two days after the election that he spoke to an open air fair gathering at Macon, renewing the Savannah ovation.

Of greater importance as shaping his political career, however, were Mr. Watson's speeches to the farmers' meetings held in protest against the jute bagging trust. High tariff on jute, he claimed, made possible a monopolistic combination of manufacturers of bagging for cotton bales with resultant high prices on bagging.

His speech at Thomson to a large gathering of farmers was signal and was widely published. He told his hearers that there was a time when the influence of the farmer was felt in every department of affairs, but that now he was being more and more eliminated. He attributed this to protection of manufacturing interests with high tariffs. Here was his beginning in the problem of governmental and political economy, the soundness of which is no question for determination here.

"To the manufacturer this government of ours guarantees a profit by excluding competition by means of the tariff, while the farmer is compelled to pay an exorbitant tax upon the necessities of life; and, to sell the products of

THE ENLARGING ARENA

his labor, is forced into a free market and must compete with all the world. As a consequence the farming interests of the South are in a languishing condition."

And even at this early day he was scoring the system "under which any kind of stocks and bonds are security for money borrowed from national banks while the farmer's land is worthless as security"—nothing in the world but a preachment for the thing later claimed credit for by others, federal loans to farmers.

They listened and cheered. Here was a new leader, a wise one, a courageous one. They showed it on their faces; he saw it. It was an inspiration: a turning point. What would he do then? Why, run for Congress in 1890, of course.

CHAPTER XXII

THE TOUCH OF TRAGEDY

THE demand for Watson to represent the Tenth Georgia District gathered force, his position on the interests of the agricultural class, which, of course, was the prevailing class of his section, having become widely advertised. He heard from so many people and was interviewed by so many newspaper men that it became evident he should begin his campaign at once—more than a year before the election.

The National Farmers' Alliance, organized throughout the South and West, forerunner of the National Farmers' Union of today (though not so weak politically), was studying the principles and watching the politics of every candidate who offered for office.

On August 31, 1889, the Alliance organization of McDuffie County held a barbecue which assembled 3000 people—the largest crowd Thomson had ever known. On this occasion Thomas E. Watson "fired his first gun" for Congress. In the course of a speech lasting nearly two hours, he told this crowd of farmers that it ought never to forget the year 1888. It marked, he said, the beginning of the revolt, the girding of the loins of the common people, of that tide of sentiment which was to sweep them away from their old moorings and bring them into a new future. The revolt began, he said, with the convention in Atlanta which demanded tariff reform; and went on to

THE TOUCH OF TRAGEDY

the fight on the jute bagging trust—and, without recounting to them the details, he was proud of the part he had taken in this new, epoch-making movement. He paid tribute to those who had worked with him, and other prominent men spoke, but he got virtually all of the hurrahs. *The Atlanta Journal* published a full stenographic report of the Watson speech.

It may be that the success of his effort was due to the signs of the times or to his especial fitness for such an occasion; but there was another cause back of the zeal he displayed on this eventful day—when it seemed that he had sought to lose himself in his deliverance. And this lay in a tragedy whose shadow was never wholly lifted from his stormy life.

On February 22, 1885, there had been born to the Watsons their third and last child—Louise. Very delicate, she had been twice nursed through an illness that almost brought death. On April 17, 1889, she was stricken suddenly again. Throughout a day and night of hopeless grief mother, father, sister and brother watched beside the little bed. The image of her father, they all had said. That he loved her more than his own life, all knew.

The father stood over the little form in the small hours of night, knowing only too well that the light was fading, and said "Missy," the pet name he had always used.

She opened her eyes; she had heard him. She smiled upon him and the mother so sweetly, as though there were no death. She said: "Let me sleep, Mama,"—then the darkness came.

The first journey to the graveyard—it was so hard. And there were the toys and the little bonnet she had decked with flowers for them to weep over on their return.

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

Mr. Watson was prostrated with grief. The child was the very joy of his life. He could only hold his beloved wife's hand as they wept together. He tried to speak words of comfort; but the light of his hope seemed to have gone out with the life of little Louise. He gave himself up to a paroxysm of grief.

"Ambition, my dear," he would say to Mrs. Watson, "what can it give to fill the vacant place? What praise could ever be so sweet as one echo of her laughter? What monument won could make me forget the little slab that covers her? Riches? Every comfort it brings will only remind that she does not share it. Duty? Yes, it must be met. Courage? Yes, it is heroic. Still the dull throb of the old wound! Can courage always keep tears away from the eyes? My dear, must there not be a loyalty which forbids forgetfulness and pleads against the lost one being supplanted?"

Mrs. Watson, as great as was her grief, tried to bear up for the sake of him who was now so overwhelmed. She put her arms around him, trying in vain to stem the tide of sorrow that immersed him, as he cried out in his agony——

"Louise, oh, my child! We loved you; ah, we loved you! And all the coming and going of the years cannot hide your radiant face from us. The playmates in whom you delighted, the pets you fondled—all, all may have lost recollection of you and gone on to others who suit as well; but to us there can be no filling of the void sacred to your precious life!

"Some day the summons will reach us—it may be when we creep, decrepit, into the gray gloom of old age. But whenever it comes the thought of the dead child will be

THE TOUCH OF TRAGEDY

in our souls as it is today; and could we know that she will be ours again, with all her loveliness and all her purity, death would be a tempter. But never to see her again, to hear her voice, to be greeted by her smile—this is the thought which breaks my heart and deadens my hope.

“Great God! Some day, some day, out of thy infinite compassion, touch these weary souls with resignation and with hope!”

It was thus for months—hope deadened, joy of life gone. He now knew what it was to feel a sorrow no paltry gift of office could assuage—never as long as he lived.

And so it was that pain in his heart—that longing to forget—far more than aught else at this time that drove him out into the maelstrom of politics. And it was in direct accord with the depth of his grief that he threw himself into his speeches with all the energy of his being.

He pushed his campaign with all the strength at his command in every county in the district, basing it entirely upon what he termed the demands of a new era, and not once speaking in personal derogation of the highly esteemed Major George T. Barnes of Augusta, Congressman from the Tenth at the time.

Then in October came the event which gave his mind additional and ample surcease of sorrow. On the 12th of that month he received from Warrenton the following telegram:

“I have killed Jim Cody. Come instantly.

“C. E. MCGREGOR.”

CHAPTER XXIII

THE CELEBRATED MCGREGOR TRIAL

AWAY from the field of politics Watson now turned to enter without reservation the province of law. The campaign for Congress was forgotten—the life of his bosom friend, Charley McGregor, was at stake. This problem was now paramount; nothing else must interfere.

The grand jury at the April term, 1890, of Warren Superior Court returned a true bill charging Major McGregor, Warrenton's most pretentious citizen, with the murder of James M. W. Cody, its most prosperous merchant, on October 12, 1889; and on April 10th there began before Judge Samuel Lumpkin the most important legal drama in the career of Thomas E. Watson. He had spent many hours, day and night, for a battle he knew would be without quarter, for both defendant and deceased were backed by a host of adherents.

There had been ample time in which to set the stage and carefully decide upon counsel. The family and friends of Cody spared neither pains nor money. Though the state would be amply taken care of by the able Solicitor-General, William M. Howard, they had procured other noted talent. There was Hal Lewis (alluded to above in some of the Crawfordville incidents), who later sprang into national prominence in a speech at the Democratic National Convention of 1896, and became a Justice of the Supreme Court of Georgia. There were also A. S. Morgan, E. P.

THE MCGREGOR TRIAL

Davis and E. H. Cason, of the local bar. But the array of lawyers for the state was most important for the mighty H. D. D. Twiggs.

Not without full reason had Watson called him the best criminal lawyer in Georgia. Even the present writer can testify to the splendor of Twiggs. He remembers how, when just a boy, he was awed and thrilled by the majesty of this veteran courthouse figure, who, though then 70 years old, stood, with his splendid stature of six feet robed in the conventional Prince Albert, before a jury two hours and freed in a second trial a man who had been under sentence of death two years.

And oh, the blighting sarcasm of Twiggs, who, with that pitilessly cynical curl of his lips, would turn to the courtroom balcony and, in mock courtesy, bestow upon some negro woman witness for the other side the title of "gallery goddess!" And oh, the effect upon the jury!

Well, what of the other array? Just one. What! Just one lawyer to combat the above corner on Georgia legal talent? It was even so. For though the able James Whitehead had been employed to aid Thomas E. Watson, he had been taken out of the case suddenly, ere it well opened, to go to the bedside of a dying child. Yes, it was 33-year-old Tom Watson by himself.

And so the battle was on in a case which, for sensational, bizarre, unheard-of developments is without parallel in all the annals of Georgia trials.

A digest of the complicated facts and alleged facts involved—brought out on the trial, and surrounding the case—is that Major McGregor, entering his front yard on his way home from a lodge meeting on the night of December 23, 1887, was suddenly struck in the abdomen by

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

some mysterious force. He first thought it was a fire cracker as the boys were celebrating Christmas. When, however, there was no repetition of the explosion to indicate a prank, and on looking around he saw a cloaked figure taking flight over a hedge, he rushed into the house crying "Murder! murder!" His wife calmed him and, on examination, told him he was shot.

Search then and investigation for some time afterwards failed to solve the mystery. Eventually reports reached McGregor that James M. W. Cody had revealed to close friends that, because of alleged remarks of McGregor concerning a lady who was related to Cody, Cody had waited in front of McGregor's house on the night of the above shooting to have a talk, but, becoming uncontrollably incensed on sight of McGregor, he had pulled his pistol, fired and then fled in great regret for his deed. Governor John B. Gordon had proclaimed a reward for arrest of the culprit, as had Cody himself.

These reports continuing to reach McGregor, he sought an indictment against Cody for assault with intent to murder, which the grand jury returned in April 1889.

It was further set up by the defense that Cody made himself so scarce the case against him was repeatedly prevented from coming to trial.

McGregor was haunted with fear of assassination. He openly declared he feared no man or number of men by day, but that Cody would shoot him in the night time; that he lived in constant dread of it, so much so he left and entered his house at night by secret passages. The situation wore on until, unable to bear the dread longer, according to the defense; but because McGregor did not want Cody, on his eventual trial for shooting McGregor, to tell the

THE MCGREGOR TRIAL

reason for his doing so, indicated in the above reports, according to the state, McGregor went up to Cody on a main street down town and shot him to death with a pistol, firing three times.

It was a pretty tough case—any way you look at it. When the state closed, Watson offered nothing but the defendant's statement. He would go to the jury solely on the proposition that to anticipate an assassination by killing the assassin was the logical extension of the law of self-defense—and, as you may be quite sure, upon the Watson power over a jury.

The argument of Hal Lewis, opening for the prosecution, was able. The crowds which had covered every square-inch of courtroom floor were expectant of the next. It would be that of Twiggs; the defense, because it introduced no testimony, being allowed the opening and concluding arguments. Watson had waived his opening argument as he intended to put all his power into his conclusion.

Before Twiggs proceeded he requested the court to let him put up a newly discovered witness. It was so permitted. The witness testified McGregor had once said to him that "It was a good thing Cody had hit the grit; that if he came back McGregor would kill him."

McGregor took the stand to deny the truth of this testimony. Seeing that the defendant, who was himself a lawyer, was beginning to elaborate and gesticulate, Twiggs said:

"Why, your Honor, he's making an argument, not a statement."

McGregor became enraged.

"My God, Judge Twiggs, give me some show!" he

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

shouted. "For God's sake, give me the show that the Constitution of the State gives me. God knows it pains me to have to ask mercy of any man; but my God, sir, my life is at stake!"

"That's all right, Charley; I'll take care of that," interposed Watson to reassure his client.

Needless to dwell upon the 5-hour argument of Twiggs, consuming most of the third day of the trial. According to the press, represented by Alex. W. Bealer for *The Atlanta Journal*, E. B. Hook, city editor of *The Augusta Chronicle*, Joe Ohl and others, it was a masterpiece in its entirety.

At five minutes to 4 o'clock Watson began his argument. He had promised Major McGregor to deliver him from the hand of danger and there was no maneuver, stratagem or artifice he would not employ to carry out his promise—to say nothing of gaining the huge boost of triumphing alone over a "regiment" of the best lawyers in Georgia.

Consequently he so arranged that, as he began, in a preliminary reading of law to the court, a boy should hasten out and notify Mrs. McGregor that he was now ready for her. Enter the wife of the accused with the children—one a baby—seating themselves at his side, the sorrow of the wife manifest, as genuine enough it was. Counsel for the defense knew when to introduce them. It must not be in the early stages of the trial lest the jury become accustomed to their presence. It must be at the psychological moment—which was just as Watson turned to the jury and began:

"Gentleman, Warren County can be no happier by having two graves instead of one.

THE MCGREGOR TRIAL

“Picture to yourself poor Charley McGregor with his stocking feet tied together, with those hands which have never refused to help a friend in time of need tied behind him, with that awful black cap hiding his distorted features from sight, with the hempen rope around his neck and his body swaying idly back and forth. Picture to yourselves that devoted wife and her children, weeping over the cold and silent body of that executed loved one. Picture their nameless grief that will cling to them, with all the degradation that hovers over the family of an executed criminal as long as life itself shall last.

“That, gentlemen, is the picture you make if you bring in a verdict of guilty.

“Picture to yourselves Charley McGregor, clad in a striped suit, chained to a negro, working out his life beneath the earth amid the humid horrors of a Georgia coal mine. Picture the stain you will place upon the lives of his innocent daughters, who will say to themselves, as they bow their heads in the anguish of their souls: ‘My father is a convict.’

“You can paint that picture by bringing in a verdict of guilty with a recommendation of mercy.

“Let me present another picture of the glad sunshine of tomorrow. [The next day would be Sunday.] The holy Sabbath smiles in holy joy through the evergreen trees and falls upon a happy family re-united in yonder household. Charley McGregor, the gold of his soul purified by the fire through which it has gone, stands once more within his own home a free man.

“Oh, gentlemen, wouldn’t you love to see the joy of those little children? Every night when you have gone to your rooms that wife and those children have passed up

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

these steps and brought comfort and cheer to the heart of Charley McGregor, as he lay there in this temple of justice, strengthened only by the knowledge that that wife and those children were nightly breathing into heaven a prayer for his deliverance from this fearful peril.

"That picture you can make by bringing in a verdict of not guilty.

"Gentlemen, remember there will come a time when you will stand before that Great Arbiter. There must be a verdict of not guilty on your cases before there can be unbarred to you the gates of the celestial city."

And Watson, acting the situation he had called up, went pacing up and down before the jury, a simulated St. Peter.

"'C. T. Davenport: not guilty; James R. Bishop: not guilty; Thomas J. Barksdale: not guilty,' " and so on to the end of the twelve.

"God knows if I could go away from this courtroom with the music of those blessed words, 'not guilty,' ringing in my ears, and I could go to the embrace of my own sweet wife, feeling that Charley McGregor had been restored to his, tomorrow would indeed be a blessed Sabbath for him."

But this line was by no means all. The court recessed for supper when he had been speaking one hour. On its return he resumed by reviewing every scrap of the evidence. He argued with force his contention that McGregor, after all patience, had finally been forced to shoot to save his own life—that it was the only reasonable self-defense of a reasonable man. The legal soundness of this position is not for our argument here. It is enough for

THE MCGREGOR TRIAL

the province of this book to say that he made the jury see it.

When he closed his 3-hour deliverance by candle and oil-lamp light, he was exhausted. The congratulations heaped upon him fell on a heart full of hope.

It was Thursday, the 10th, when the trial opened. It was exactly eight days later when the verdict was returned. The trial occupied three days—the jury was out five. The State of Georgia was in suspense.

The defendant slept in the grand jury room of the courthouse, in charge of a bailiff. This was because there were reports that Cody men meant to kill him if acquitted, if not before.

Late one night of the vigil before a verdict, McGregor, full of apprehension, was aroused by a noise sounding like the drop of a ladder against the window. He sprang up. The bailiff drew his gun, peering out. Seeing a man running, he fired, missing. Investigation showed a ladder against the window. Soon the report spread that they were trying to take the defendant out and lynch him. Few would believe it. It finally developed that the fears, though naturally enough induced, were groundless.

The stand of a medicine faker, with a show of banjo-playing negroes on the courthouse grounds, had been turned over by a crowd of young men who had heard that the quack was living with a negro wife. When they accomplished this they fled—one running through the courtyard. The noise McGregor heard was the overturning of the stand; the fleeing man the bailiff saw was the youth of the escapade who ran across the courtyard. The ladder

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

found against the window had been left there by carpenters some time before. But then a man who has been waiting days for a jury to say whether he should live or die will be excused for any kind of fear.

Still the jury remained out. Day after day dragged by. Judge Lumpkin became impatient. The case was getting on his nerves. He was already overdue for opening court in another county. He would declare a mistrial and let another jury try the case later. Watson saw the danger of such a course. He went before the Judge.

"We beseech your Honor to wait yet one more day—just one more day. We believe by then we shall have a verdict. We believe only one man is holding out against us."

All right, the court would wait just one more day. McGregor was expecting a verdict on the 16th, as that was his "mascot day." On the 16th virtually every important event of his life had transpired. It had made him superstitious about the 16th.

At 9 o'clock on the morning of April 17th the jury brought in a verdict of not guilty. It was then learned that one juror, for whom the eleven had almost exhausted its energy in prayer, had held the jury out all that time.

And now was the Watson fame more heralded than ever before.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE FRUIT OF PRINCIPLE AND STRATEGY

HIS signal triumph in the McGregor case insuring still larger crowds at his appearances on the stump, Mr. Watson renewed the campaign for Congress. We are to remember that he was now sowing the seeds of political reforms which, in larger measure than has been generally admitted, became embraced in party platforms and in law books. The main things he attacked were the tariff and the national bank and currency system. He was running openly upon the platform adopted by the Farmers' Alliance at Ocala, Florida, and was making virtually the same speech in each county of the district. Fortunately the author has before him a complete report of this speech, made in the summer of 1890. As will be seen from an extract thereof reproduced below, the McDuffie candidate was now giving more attention to the Richmond gentleman whom he was trying to unseat:

"Now, fellow citizens, for the first time you are organized for reform. It is a duty of every man who loves his country to assist in this work. Think of it: 3,200 national banks, by organization, absolutely control legislation on all questions relating to manufacture. Tariff rates are for the benefit of the few manufacturers who control them.

"A few manufacturers in jute products, iron, steel, agricultural implements, have controlled the manufactures and grown rich at your expense, while you, 17,000,000

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

strong, have been but an undisciplined mob, easily managed and controlled by these disciplined soldiers of finance and government.

"In Georgia there are 432,000 farmers and 36,000 in all other vocations, but these have been organized and have been your masters in every question of finance or State control.

"Farmers now recognize the value of organization. Men in office never start reforms. Men in prosperity do not want reform. Reforms commence from below. They are started by the people who suffer from injustice. They begin with the "outs," not the "ins." The great reform movement of England was commenced by Bright and Cobden, men on the outside. Your reform is no exception. It commenced among the people. You owe nothing to those in authority; nothing to those who have been representing the prosperity that unjust laws have brought. You owe nothing to those who have borne the burden and heat of the day, and who are pledged to the success of your cause. If that cause is right, it will succeed. If wrong, it will fail.

"The tariff is one thing that needs reform. It is a system that comes into your cotton field and lays tribute upon your labor and pours it into the coffers of the rich manufacturers. It makes you pay for your clothing one-third more than its natural price. It makes your sugar cost you twice as much as it ought to cost. For every iron tool you use in stirring the soil you pay 45 per cent. more than its normal value.

"You say that this must stop. It has gone far enough.

"Your next demand is against national banks. You have all heard of the currency system. If you had a horse

PRINCIPLE AND STRATEGY

it would not make much difference to you whether it was worth \$50 or \$100. But suppose you owed \$100 and there was only \$100 in circulation, you would have one scale of prices. Suppose you destroyed half of this, then it would take twice as much to pay your debt—two horses instead of one.

“I am giving you facts and giving them hurriedly. The currency has been diminished five times within the past thirty years, and it is now ten times less than it was. You would therefore have to pay a debt with ten times more property in accordance with the going down of the currency.

“This state of affairs all over the country has caused hardship and ruin. The currency has been contracted until it is now but \$5.75 per capita against more than \$50 per capita thirty years ago.

“We demand the free coinage of silver. The national banking system, based upon the deposit of bonds, should be abolished. When a national bond is deposited the government issues 90 per cent. of its value at the rate of 1 per cent. interest. Nine hundred dollars may be drawn from \$1,000 of bonds. The depositor, that is the national bank, pays 1 per cent. on this \$1,000. The farmers, although they pay seven-tenths of all the taxes, have to borrow from the national bank at 8 per cent. The national banker, who has paid only 1 per cent. of this money, makes a clear gain of 7 per cent. In addition, the government pays the banker 4 per cent. on his bonds. This makes a profit to the banker of 11 per cent. on his money.

“A few days ago Mr. Phil Carroll wrote a long article in *The Augusta Chronicle*, in which he gave, he said, Major Barnes' view on the questions of the day. He says

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

Major Barnes is in favor of abolishing a national banking system. I was surprised. It is the first time that this statement has been given to this district. Last year Major Barnes addressed the constituency of the Tenth District. He never once opened his mouth on the banking system. He was as silent as the inside of a vacuum. Major Barnes didn't say a word about the great revolution that is taking place among the people. Now when clouds are seen in the heavens Mr. Phil Carrol says Major Barnes is in favor of abolishing the banking system. In his speech in Congress on the 10th of May, Major Barnes made what is known as his tariff reform speech. He said he favored the rapid extinction of the public debt and the banking system which must expire with it. This means that he is willing to let the banking system expire when the public indebtedness expires. The present bonds have yet seventeen years to run. So Major Barnes is in favor of letting the national banking system run on for seventeen years more at least. He is in favor of the government buying up these bonds. The government is buying them up now at a heavy premium; \$42,000,000 in premiums has been paid. Major Barnes is in favor of the government spending our money in premiums on these bonds, or letting them and the banking system run on for seventeen years. Either is wrong.

"This speech was made under the five minutes rule. *The Augusta Chronicle* has made quite a reputation for the Major as a debater. Under the five minutes rule the Speaker would not have permitted him to speak for ten minutes. At the end of five minutes the gavel would come down and end the debate. But the speech when published in *The Chronicle* took up five solid columns. The fastest

PRINCIPLE AND STRATEGY

reader would take fully twenty minutes to read it. That speech was never made in Congress. Major Barnes addressed the chair, made a few remarks and gave his speech by sample. He spoke on for five minutes, and then, when the gavel fell, sent for the reporter and the report went out that Major Barnes had addressed the House and his remarks would appear hereafter. It took him ten days to compose the speech after he was said to have made it in Congress! A man that has been in Congress five years and cannot sustain himself on a tariff question, which a man cannot shoot at and miss, had better bundle up and come home. [Great laughter and applause.]

"This is not the speech he made, because he did not have time. But it is the speech he would have made if he had had time.

"This reminds me of a story I once heard about a man who went to a museum. The showman said to him, on showing him a rusty sword, 'This is the very sword that Balaam had when he met the angel.' The countryman was pretty well up with the Bible as countrymen generally are. He said that Balaam did not have a sword but that he wished he had one. 'Ah, yes,' said the showman, 'this is the identical sword that he wished he had.'

"That speech that Major Barnes published is the identical speech that he wished he had made; but he did not make it. [Laughter.]

"The proposition to abolish the national banking system by the expiration of the bonds, or by the premium, which is Major Barnes' position on the question, does not satisfy the demand for reform in this country.

"Major Barnes has never explained where he stood on the sub-treasury plan; and even Mr. Phil Carroll, who

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

mentioned the banking system when Major Barnes didn't, does not say where the Major stands on that bill.

"I have been asked and I have answered. Major Barnes has been asked and has never answered. I tell you now, face to face with the people of Lincoln, Taliaferro, Warren, McDuffie and Glascock—no matter how dark the hour may be, no matter how keen the wind may whistle from the east—you will always know how I stand on every question that affects your interest. [Great applause.] Many wait until the cat jumps. Some make the cat jump. [Laughter.] Some wait for the tide. Some come after the victory and claim a share in the laurels. It is quite another thing to take your position in the ranks and fight in the heat of the day.

"I ask you if I have not been shoulder to shoulder with you in every fight, and if I have ever failed to say how I stood and waited till the tide turned to take your side. When we succeed these fellows will come out and say, 'I was always with you.' If we fail they will say, 'I have nothing to do with it.'

"Two boys once went deer-stalking. This is done at night by shining the eyes of the deer. After a while they saw a pair of shining eyes and both fired. They killed a doe. The little boy said, 'Bud, ain't we slaying 'em?' The big boy said, 'What the devil have you had to do with it?' After a while they saw another pair of eyes and fired. This time they killed a buck. The little boy said, 'Bud, ain't we slaying 'em?' But the big boy said again, 'What the devil did you have to do with it?' They were having big luck and went on hunting. After a while they saw another pair of eyes and fired. This time they killed one of their neighbor's best mules. The big Bud's knees smote

PRINCIPLE AND STRATEGY

together, and turning to the little fellow he said, 'Haven't we played hell?' But the little fellow said: 'What in the devil have I had to do with it?' [Tremendous laughter.]

"If you follow office seekers they will say to you in the hour of success, 'I am with you'; but they will desert you when you kill the mule. We should stand together like men. Any one will be a friend as long as there is easy sailing. When disaster comes they will say, 'What in the devil have I had to do with it.'"

"I have no time to say much more, but I will say this, that I can stand upon every plank in the platform. [Great applause.] There is not a plank in it upon which I would refuse to take my stand. If the victory is ours, I will help you enjoy it. If defeat must come, I will help you bear it."

Watson challenged Barnes to a series of joint debates on the hustings. The incumbent, finally yielding to pressure, met him. It was one of the Watson maneuvers—a part of a carefully laid plan.

The farmers—Alliance men—in those days were far better posted on national questions and issues than are the farmers of today. They were better posted, in fact, than were the city voters. Watson had been doing much along an educational line; his speeches had been constructive and had aroused a hunger for information, wide reading and broad thinking. He saw the result. He knew these rural citizens were well up on what the race was really founded. So witness his incomparable stratagem.

At a cross-roads joint speaking with his opponent one day (and this was but an illustration of each of the few joint meetings held) Watson, when his time came to take the platform, began as follows:

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

"Well, boys, I'm going to turn this gathering today into a school. You boys, now, are the pupils, and Congressman Barnes up here on the platform is at the head of the class. I am the teacher. I want to see how you all are getting along—what you have been doing and how thorough you are. Everybody must come up and toe the mark. Have you been reading up on the tariff? If so hold up your hands."

The hand of every man in that multitude but one went up. The gentleman from the Tenth Georgia District merely looked on.

"All right. I'll start with the head pupil, who ought to know. Mr. Barnes, when a national bond is deposited, how much of its value does the Government issue in money?"

No answer.

"Tell him, boys."

"Ninety per cent.," roared a sea of voices, to the consternation of the Congressman.

"All right. Now, Mr. Barnes, how much interest does the national banker¹ pay on the money he gets on his bonds?"

No answer.

"Tell him, boys."

"One per cent.," they cried in unison amid boisterous laughter.

"All right. Now, Mr. Barnes, how much interest do the farmers have to pay the banker every time they borrow a little money?"

The Augustan squirmed around in his seat, but somehow he couldn't think.

"Go on and tell him, boys."

PRINCIPLE AND STRATEGY

"Eight per cent.," they yelled.

"You bet they do. Then, Mr. Barnes, how much has the national banking system you have been upholding in Washington robbed the farmers of?"

The gentleman could proffer no reply.

"All right, boys."

"Seven per cent.," broke from the throats of a segment of society that had said it was sick and tired of the system.

"Yes and then when the government goes and pays the banker 4 per cent. on his bonds, his profit on his money becomes how much?"

"Eleven per cent.," they shouted.

"And what do you ever get?" Watson hurled at the crowd.

"Nothing!" they yelled back, to the uneasiness and chagrin of the man they had hitherto elected to Congress, who now saw plainly they would never do it again.

And when it was all over, Watson would shake hands with his opponent and adjourn to the next stump to repeat the performance until Barnes quit meeting him.

Judge Twiggs was out campaigning for Barnes. He was not afraid of Watson, hesitating neither to attack his platform nor to engage in ridicule at Watson's expense and there was already some feeling between them.

Shortly before the Congressional campaign was renewed, high feeling between Twiggs and Watson developed following trial of a case in Columbia County. Twiggs, probably 20 years Watson's senior, both in years and legal experience, "lambasted" the Thomson lawyer terrifically in his speech to the jury. As Twiggs had the conclusion, Watson had no opportunity to reply. True, Watson had often applied, without stint, ridicule and dia-

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

tribe to Twiggs. He had once put the bar of a whole county to laughing at Twiggs' expense by declaring, during the trial of a hog stealing case, that Twiggs "has a mind so imaginative and a fancy so poetic that he could weave metaphors around a wheelbarrow and draw music from a fence rail. He has brought his nose prominently into this case of identity. I presume from what he says that he could, with all ease, tell you the sex of a hog by merely smelling the gravy."

On the occasion of the Columbia County case, however, the line Twiggs had taken was so provoking, his satire so pointed, that the callow Watson couldn't stand it. He called Judge Twiggs into the jury room, locked the door, put the key in his pocket, and told the older man that he did not want to kill him and presumed Twiggs did not want to kill him, but that somebody was going to get killed if Twiggs didn't alter his tone toward him in the court room.

Twiggs assured Watson of no intention to hurt his feelings, put him in a good humor and the two laughed the matter off.

Now, however, Judge Twiggs was going after Watson in a much more definite fashion than was Barnes or any of the Congressman's other backers. In a speech at Waynesboro he accused Watson of writing a card for *The Charleston (S. C.) News and Courier*, in which Watson called himself an eminent lawyer, a political prophet and a genius, and dubbed Major Barnes a clam. A report of the speech appeared in *The Augusta Chronicle*.

Watson went after Twiggs in *The Atlanta Constitution*, declaring that "Judge Twiggs' harangue at Waynesboro was simply the vapping of a soured outlaw who is so

PRINCIPLE AND STRATEGY

accustomed to abusing everything and everybody that the restraints of truth have no power over him."

Judge Twiggs decided it was his time to get mad. He sent his law partner, Marion Verdery, from Augusta to Watson's home with a communication containing a challenge to a duel. Watson refused to receive the communication, declaring to Mr. Verdery that he was not a duelling man, the practice being against the law and wrong in principle. However, he told Mr. Verdery that he would be on the streets of Augusta and at the fair there on a certain day and would be prepared to defend himself, if attacked. Watson went to the fair with Major McGregor and spent much of the day on the streets, but Twiggs made no attempt to molest him.

The race for Congress wore on, county after county holding a Democratic primary, which would be really the test. Watson carried nearly every county in the district, thus becoming the nominee in the next State Convention with the bulk of the county electoral votes. In the general election which followed on November 4th he was duly elected Congressman from the Tenth District of Georgia for the 52nd Congress over A. E. ("Toney") Williams, negro Republican nominee, carrying, of course, every county in the district.

CHAPTER XXV

STRAINED LINES THAT BREAK

WATSON'S staunch demand for adoption of the principles in the Ocala platform of the Farmers' Alliance—free coinage of silver, stoppage of governmental land grants to corporations, governmental ownership or control of railroads, stoppage of gambling in cotton futures, free trade or a radical scaling down of the tariff, a subtreasury system with federal loans to farmers, and popular election of United States Senators—had created a political upheaval in Georgia. Regarding the last named reform, Mr. Watson was saying that it was easier for a member of the Legislature to be bought than for the whole people to be bought.

"The United States Senate has come to be a stench in the nostrils of the nation, and even the man in the moon holds his nose as he sails over the Senate chamber," he said.

The Legislature had become worked up to such a pitch that it invited him to address its members on the new departure on July 15, 1891, and he complied. More and more strenuously he argued the necessity for radical reform in the formal demands of Democracy.

"My friends, let us not misunderstand each other," began his key note. "It is not you that are doing the fighting, but other people are fighting you. I say that the only hope of the Democratic Party saving itself is to broaden out, to liberalize and recognize the rights of the

STRAINED LINES THAT BREAK

people. The only hope for the Democratic Party to succeed is to be warned in time, for we have suffered ridicule until we will suffer it no more. A national banker and gold-bug is chairman of your Democratic Campaign Committee, and you sent on some of your most trusted leaders to Washington to call attention to the evils I have been calling your attention to tonight, and he told them, in effect, to go home and attend to their business; that the Democratic Party in Washington wanted nothing to do with them. Is not that so? Does not Mr. Oates say: 'You must come to our terms or we will drive you out of the party?' "

He declared there was no difference between the Republican and Democratic platforms so far as the farmers and laboring classes were concerned. The former never had cared and the latter had departed from its principles. The latter had better get back to Jeffersonian standards.

Democratic leaders—the bosses, Watson called them—began putting the public on notice that the party would brook no such revolutionary talk as Watson was doing. His lines were closely watched, and newspaper editorials began bombarding him.

The Augusta Herald called on Watson to resign the office to which he had been elected, get out of the Democratic Party and run his race over as a third partyite, because "the *Herald* feels sure that Mr. Watson, as a third party candidate, will not sweep the Democratic district as he did as the Democratic candidate."

Shown a dispatch to this effect in Atlanta, and asked what he had to say about it, Mr. Watson chuckled and declared:

"Oh, nothing, except that I know the sentiment of the

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

people of the Tenth District better than does *The Augusta Evening Herald*."

He wrote a hot card to *The Atlanta Constitution* "for garbling its report of his speech before the Legislature." That newspaper replied that "it was no injustice to Mr. Watson to call him to order, and it had criticised only that part of his speech attacking the party."

To the insistent reporters who dogged his steps in Atlanta with: "Do you consider that you were elected on the Democratic platform?", he replied:

"Yes, but not that alone. The Alliance platform was the special reason for my success. No man could have carried my district by a simple endorsement of the regular Democratic platform. In accepting the nomination I distinctly repeated my adherence to the Alliance demands."

"If the Alliance demands are not acceded to by the Democratic Party will you leave the Democratic Party?"

"The Alliance in Georgia is the Democratic Party. They have carried the banner to victory every year since the war, when so many of our cities were captured by Republicanism. The Alliance will adhere to its demands. If the party bosses kick the Alliance out, as Oates says they will do, the responsibility will be with the party bosses. I will remain on the Ocala platform with the people who endorse it."

"Will the Republicans leave their party and join hands with the Alliance men in the South?"

"I believe so."

"If you leave the Democratic Party will it be breaking faith with the constituency by which you were elected?"

"By no means. If I ever leave the Democratic Party, it will be in company with the Democrats who believe in

STRAINED LINES THAT BREAK

principles more strongly than they do in party names. In other words, if the very Democrats to whom I owe my election are driven out of the party by these bosses who treat our demands with hatred, scorn and contempt, I break no faith with these Democrats by going with them. On the other hand, it will be keeping faith with them in the highest sense of the word. It will be giving to their platform the very loyalty they expect and demand."

It was still more "unprecedented notoriety" that Watson gained by his Atlanta speech, according to other papers; and it was seen that, if he did decide to leave the Democratic Party, he would take a huge number of voters with him. The responses to his new preachments had been too pronounced.

By no means considering himself on the run, Watson invaded the strongholds of the enemy. He went to a bar-becue at Gracewood, near Augusta, to take to task *The Augusta Chronicle*, which was also trying to read him out of the party. He declared that this paper and *The Atlanta Constitution* had been shelling him for years, and that he proposed to hit back—not in the country counties, but in their own camps.

Ridiculing *The Chronicle* for calling the Alliance platform "the Ocala fraud," he said that every time an effort had been made to get an article on the free list *The Chronicle* had said: no, leave the tariff on salt, and increase it on cotton ties.

He declared *The Constitution* had reprinted an editorial in *The Richmond (Va.) Dispatch* to the effect that he had said he left the legal profession because it had become degraded. When he called the attention of its editor, Captain Howell, to this, the reply was they had to print the

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

news, he said; and this "was not giving news, but spreading lies."

He said they had given up year after year and that now was the time to fight.

"There is no need for fighting among ourselves; we can all go forward together," said a man on the platform.

"Then for God's sake stop *The Chronicle* from talking about the Ocala fraud, communism and paternalism, and Alliance men getting out of the Democratic Party," Watson retorted.

The meeting wound up with adoption of resolutions condemning "the subsidized and partisan press of the State for misrepresenting Watson," endorsing "his present course" and pledging to it unstinted support.

Alliance rally after rally was held in various counties of the State, each of which Mr. Watson was invited to address. And even wider scope was taken by the situation. In September he met in joint debate on the subtreasury and farmer loan question, United States Senator M. C. Butler, of South Carolina, at Batesburg. The newspapers of Atlanta, Augusta, Charleston, Columbia and Charlotte were represented by special correspondents. He failed not to accede to every urge to appear before the people, for a more shortened vision, a lesser ambition than his own could now sense that destiny ascending the horizon. He was soon to appear before his State and his nation with quite a covetable private possession—a political party in fee simple; a party that was, would be, and wanted to be—just Watson.

CHAPTER XXVI

CONGRESSMAN

CONVINCED that the leaders of the Democratic Party did not intend to adopt all of the principles he and other insurgents (in the Democratic and Republican Parties) were advocating, Mr. Watson began laying plans for a new political party in Georgia which should be under his control after his entrance into Congress. Gatherings of the National Farmers' Alliance, the headquarters of which were in Washington, D. C., and of local Alliance bodies had precipitated that distrust era in American politics, known as the third party movements of the nineties. There was already a People's Party in Kansas, one of the most aggressive States in the reform movement. Of course, the subject of this biography was alive to the trend of the times, but he had to be up and doing for he must repair to Washington in December.

In September 1891 Mr. Watson, with C. C. Post and Elam Christian, organized in Atlanta the People's Publishing Company to issue *The People's Party Paper*, the new political leader in Georgia intending to see to it that he got his message over to the people when the Democratic press should prove hostile. It was a venture of the shrewdest sort, for not only were there already enough Alliance men and would-be Alliance men to make the paper pay, but it would mean a particular Watson-

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

controlled mouth-piece in Georgia for that gentleman in Washington.

Mr. Watson, as president of the company and editor-in-chief of the paper, issued a circular declaring the purpose of the paper was "to educate our people upon governmental questions; to assail official corruption; to oppose class rule, legislative favoritism and the centralizing tendencies manifest in both the old parties."

The publication, a single sheet, making four pages of seven columns each, made its bow, as a weekly, from 119 $\frac{1}{2}$ Whitehall Street, on October 1, 1891. To give it a chance to grow upon the merit of its contents, the name of no man went on it at first, as being in control; the name of Mr. Christian, only as business manager, appearing. As the paper grew in size and influence this policy was changed and the publishers' card on the editorial page carried: "Thos. E. Watson, Editor and President; C. E. McGregor, Business Manager; Lulu M. Pearce, Secretary and Treasurer" and the names of others of the personnel. Miss Pearce was the daughter of Mr. Watson's old school teacher.

This ingenuous step taken, Mr. Watson with his wife, Durham and Agnes, went to Washington early in December. He had bought a house at 129 Fourth Street, S. E., while it was under construction, and hence had a brand new home for his family. And by no means was it a mere shack. It was a splendid brick building of four stories, with eight large rooms besides baths, closets, kitchen and extra rooms. The place was equipped strictly up to the day and was convenient to the Capitol.

On December 7th the Fifty-second Congress of the United States opened. Benjamin Harrison was Presi-

CONGRESSMAN

dent and Levi P. Morton, as Vice-President, was President of the Senate. The Senators from Georgia were Alfred H. Colquitt and John B. Gordon. The ten Georgia districts were represented in the House of Representatives, in numerical order, by Rufus E. Lester, Henry G. Turner, Charles F. Crisp, Charles L. Moses, Leonidas F. Livingston, James H. Blount, R. William Everett, Thomas G. Lawson, Thomas E. Winn and Thomas E. Watson.

Signal for future reputation, there were in the Senate: Orville H. Platt, of Connecticut; Eugene Hale, of Maine; Arthur P. Gorman, of New York; George F. Hoar, of Massachusetts; and Nelson W. Aldrich, of Rhode Island; and in the House: William C. P. Breckinridge, of Kentucky; Sereno E. Payne, of New York; Henry Cabot Lodge, of Massachusetts; and William Jennings Bryan, of Nebraska. Mr. Bryan, like Mr. Watson, was a new Congressman.

On December 8th Clerk Edward McPherson, of the House, took the chair for the election of a Speaker. Mr. Holman, of Indiana, re-nominated Charles F. Crisp, of Georgia; Mr. Henderson, of Illinois, nominated Thomas B. Reed, of Maine; Mr. Simpson, of Kansas, nominated Thomas E. Watson, of Georgia. Mr. Crisp was re-elected Speaker, receiving 228 votes to 83 for Reed and 8 for Watson. Those who voted for Watson were Messrs. Baker, Davis, Clover, Otis and Simpson, of Kansas; Halvorsen, of Minnesota; and McKeighan and Kem, of Nebraska.

Appointment of committees on the 23rd resulted in Watson being placed on the Standing Committee on the Militia and the Select Committee on the Eleventh Census.

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

On January 5th, when Congress re-convened following the Christmas recess, Mr. Watson introduced a bill to prevent the payment in advance by the Secretary of the Treasury of interest on bonds; also a bill to create an income tax; and also a bill to provide for the removal of customs duties on jute bagging, jute, iron ties, and binding twine, materials used in baling cotton. They were referred to the Committee on Ways and Means, where they died.

In February he introduced a bill to repeal the Act of 1882 extending the corporate existence of national banks; and a bill to establish a system of subtreasuries. He was making good on his promises to his constituents. However, the former measure expired in the Committee on Banking and the latter was reported adversely by that on Ways and Means.

Corporations, railroads particularly, were wont at this time to quell rioting strikers with privately engaged and paid forces. The Pinkerton Detective Agency was catering to the demand for strike quellers with a considerable organization of men. Mr. Watson considered that it was an open and flagrant violation of the constitutional inhibition against private, armed forces, acting as a militia, for any corporation to furnish or maintain such organizations; and he introduced a resolution requiring the Committee on Judiciary to inquire into the nature of the Pinkerton Detective Agency, "said to maintain an armed force of 35,000 men," its rules, management, practice, charter, number and equipment; and "by what warrant of law they are used as a militia in the various states where they may be applied for by employers; and what guaranty people have that said organization may not be used in the most

CONGRESSMAN

tyrannical and disastrous manner for improper purposes, and to report whether said organization . . . is violative of the Constitution of the United States."

After a probe of the matter the committee reported and recommended adoption of a substitute confining the inquiry the committee should make, if the resolution were adopted, to the investigation of Pinkerton detectives employed by railroads engaged in interstate commerce, the object of the substitute being to confine the matter to the scope of the jurisdiction of Congress. The substitute was agreeable, and, after being advocated on the floor by Mr. Watson and Mr. Bryan, was adopted.

On July 13th the Committee on Rules reported a resolution that immediately upon adoption thereof the House proceed to consider Senate Bill No. 51 providing for the free coinage of gold and silver bullion; and if said bill were not disposed of on that day that consideration thereof be continued on the next legislative day. The purpose was to bring free silver to a vote—to have a show-down on the question the insurgents in both parties were espousing, mainly the Democrats. Of course, the stand-pat Republicans and other conservatives would filibuster to prevent this very thing.

Then ensued one of the most contentious parliamentary bickerings the 52nd Congress knew. Democratic leaders, prodded by Republicans for their recent Chicago platform for which the latter said they ought to repent, met the challenge by reading into the record excerpts thereof, such as: "We denounce the Republican legislation known as the Sherman Act of 1890 as a cowardly makeshift. . . . We hold to the use of both gold and silver as the standard money of the country, and to the coinage of both gold and

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

silver, without discriminating against either metal, . . . the maintenance of the parity of both metals, and the equal power of every dollar at all times in the markets and in payment of debts, and we demand that all paper currency shall be kept at par with and redeemable in such coin. We insist upon this policy as especially necessary for the protection of the farmers and laboring classes, the first and most defenseless victims of unstable money and a fluctuating currency."

Mr. Culberson, of Texas, and Mr. Bland, of Missouri, put the proposition clearly by stating just what was bi-metallism—"that the two metals shall be at a parity in coining and commercial value; . . . the moment you give free and unlimited coinage to silver, the silver bullion and the silver dollar will be at par, and the gold bullion and the gold dollar will be at par, and the silver bullion and gold bullion will be at par."

The effort was to take the nation away from a purely gold standard of value on the idea that it would make money cheaper, easier to get. The Republicans said this would be cheapening it all right, and debasing it at the same time.

A fight was on—wrangling amid clouds of cigar smoke "that put every member in a fog," as Watson afterwards said; "the lobby was out in force, painted women plied the younger members with their blandishments, and the Congressional barroom was crowded with bibulous statesmen."

The free-silverites finally got a vote on the resolution that the bill should be considered until it should be disposed of, and it was lost—yeas 136, nays 154, not voting 39.

The record shows that neither Watson (who afterwards characterized this eventful evening as "the night free sil-

CONGRESSMAN

ver was killed") nor Bryan, the future apostle of free silver, took part in the debate, though both voted for the resolution.

Mr. Watson voted for the "eight hour law"—a measure limiting the hours of daily service of laborers and mechanics employed upon the public works of the United States to eight hours, which passed. He was also a leader in the debate on the bill to compel railroads to equip freight cars with automatic couplers within five years, for the protection of brakemen, which, after considerable postponement, was finally put into effect. *The Record* credits him with work done on a number of other measures for the benefit of the common people.

CHAPTER XXVII

“MR. SPEAKER, WHERE WAS I AT?”

ON July 29th Mr. Wheeler, of Alabama, (General Joe Wheeler) sent to the Clerk's desk a book which he declared falsely represented his vote on the ship subsidy bill. There was a wrangle as to how much time he was to get to explain his vote, and he took back the book from the Clerk. The book was now quite famous in the hall and all the members knew what was coming. Mr. Wheeler, rising again to a question of personal privilege, sent the book again to the Clerk, “to be read the part I have marked—language which is false and insulting to the American people and to every member of this body.” The Clerk read:

“The People's Party Campaign Book, 1892. Not a Revolt; It is a Revolution. By Hon. Thomas E. Watson, Member of Congress from Georgia.’”

The marked excerpt was read. Whereupon the following highly diverting colloquy ensued:

MR. WATSON. I rise to a question of order.

THE SPEAKER. The gentleman will state it.

MR. WATSON. It is a well known principle in law that when any part of a letter is put in evidence, all of the letter must be put in. When a part of a conversation is given in evidence the whole of the conversation must be submitted. I do not pretend to say that the whole of this book should be put in evidence, but I do claim as a matter of simple justice and as a matter of conformity to

"MR. SPEAKER, WHERE WAS I AT?"

well-known legal principles that when a portion of a paragraph is read, the text should be taken so as to show its meaning, and not a garbled extract. In other words, I claim that the whole of the paragraph should be taken. I claim as a matter of right that the paragraph commencing with the words "the Congress now sitting is one illustration," should be read down to and including the end of the paragraph.

MR. WHEELER of Alabama. Well, I have no possible objection to that.

MR. BURROWS. Let the whole paragraph be read.

The SPEAKER. The Clerk will read the entire paragraph.

The Clerk read as follows:

The Congress now sitting is one illustration. Pledged to reform, they have not reformed. Pledged to economy, they have not economized. Pledged to legislate, they have not legislated. Extravagance has been the order of the day. Absenteeism was never so pronounced. Lack of purpose was never so clear. Lack of common business prudence never more glaring. Drunken members have reeled about the aisles—a disgrace to the Republic. Drunken speakers have debated grave issues on the floor and in the midst of maudlin ramblings have been heard to ask, "Mr. Speaker, where was I at?" Useless employes crowd every corridor. Useless expenditures pervade every department.

MR. WHEELER of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I have been a member of this House for a number of years past, and I have during this or previous Congresses listened to every debate upon questions of an important character, to all questions presented before the House, and I assert that the language in that book which says—that drunken

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

members have debated such questions—is the vilest and most malignant falsehood that has ever been uttered on the American Continent. [Applause.] I state that which every member here knows to be true, that any assertion “that drunken members have reeled about the aisles,” is a falsehood so great as to shock the sensibilities and the consciences of all honorable men in the entire world. The American Congress, the representatives of the people of liberty, who send here their chosen representatives, men of honor, men of intelligence, of integrity, men of high moral character, selected because they have these attributes, should not be subjected to such an outrageous and unwarranted and untruthful assault as that. I have inquired of the members on both sides of the House, and I have yet to find a single member who has seen—drunken speakers debating grave issues on this floor in the midst of maudlin ramblings, etc.

Mr. Speaker, the history of parliamentary proceedings from the beginning of civilization down to this day does not show an instance of as vile an attack upon a representative body as does this article. And yet, Mr. Speaker, you are attacked first of all. You, Mr. Speaker, our honorable presiding officer, are falsely charged with allowing drunken men, not a man, but drunken men, to discuss grave issues upon this floor. Every member of this body is tainted with the charge. Every member on this floor, except the august MR. WATSON, is charged with these grave crimes.

The wrangle diverged to an argument that had transpired between Wheeler and Watson three days before, in which, Watson said, he had been very parliamentary, whereas Wheeler had virtually accused him of attacking the party that elected him, with intent to break up the Solid South. Then—

"MR. SPEAKER, WHERE WAS I AT?"

MR. COOMBS. That is not the question. Let us hear what you have got to say about the charge you have made against this House. That is the point.

MR. WATSON. Well, now, if you will just wait for a little while I am coming to that; and I wish it to be understood that no Representative from New York can bulldoze the "gentleman from Georgia" in the exercise of his rights on this floor. He may as well understand that now.

I come now at once to the subsidy bill. The gentleman from Alabama charged me with falsely printing his vote on that question. Mr. Speaker, you will be surprised, and every member of this House will be surprised to know that I told the gentleman from Alabama on the day before yesterday that the list of Republicans there, 139 in number, was fully copied; that the Wheeler alluded to in that connection was not a Democrat, but was a Republican from Michigan. In the printed list of Democrats it ended with the names LESTER of Georgia and LESTER of Virginia, giving the whole vote 129. But the copyist stopped with the letter L, although every one there was a Democrat, except some gentlemen from New York, who are the only members on this floor who claim the privilege of calling themselves Democrats and voting as Republicans.

MR. GREENLEAF. Thank you for that.

MR. WATSON. But I come at once to the other charge of the gentleman from Alabama. The gentleman says that I threatened him on yesterday with personal violence on the floor of the House. That charge is unfounded. The gentleman may have so understood me, but he was mistaken. I went the third time to the gentleman from Alabama, endeavoring to convince him that I meant no discourtesy towards him, and if he would allow me the poor privilege of making a preliminary statement, which is ordinarily accorded to gentlemen, that I would do him such full, complete, and voluntary justice under such cir-

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

cumstances that he would have discovered there was no reason whatever for this fourth installment of his campaign speech. He denied to me the privilege which it had been customary for gentlemen always to allow to each other—the privilege of making a voluntary statement to a gentleman who had felt himself aggrieved.

The turmoil continued, growing more uncontrollable all the time as members rose to demand that Watson confine himself to the charge of drunkenness and as Watson endeavored to talk long enough, without interruption, to explain the objectionable paragraph as a whole. And—

MR. WATSON. There is not a new thing in it. There is not a charge here, scarcely, that has not been made by the Nestor of this House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. Holman), so far as extravagant legislation is concerned.

MR. DICKERSON. Did he say anything about members getting drunk?

MR. WATSON. There is not a charge in this paragraph that has not been made from that press gallery and sent ringing through the newspapers of this land; but now, because I have made it, and because ten of the People's Party are here, powerless in the grasp of your tyrannical party, you want to select me for a scapegoat—for a martyr to your prejudice. (Cries of "Oh!" on the Democratic side.)

MR. BOATNER. Mr. Speaker, I submit that nothing the gentleman has said has in any way tended to explain the language which was taken down and which he was permitted to explain.

MR. SIMPSON. The gentleman has been interrupted every minute.

The SPEAKER. The gentleman from Georgia occupies the floor simply by the indulgence of the House, simply

"MR. SPEAKER, WHERE WAS I AT?"

to make an explanation, and he is not speaking as a matter of right, but as a matter of grace.

MR. WATSON. I want no matter of grace from this Democratic majority that seeks to hiss me down, when I am defending my character here on the floor of the House. Jeffersonian Democracy grants to a man freedom of speech and freedom of press, and if you want to howl me down, do it, and I will appeal from your tyranny to the fairer sense of justice that abides in the hearts of the American people. [Applause.] I scorn your grace. I scorn your mercy.

MR. BOATNER. I move that the privilege which has been granted to the gentleman be withdrawn.

MR. WATSON. I scorn——

The SPEAKER. The gentleman from Georgia [MR. WATSON] will take his seat. The Sergeant-at-Arms will require the gentleman from Georgia to take his seat.

MR. WATSON (speaking at the same time). And if you seek to oppress me, I squarely throw it back on you.

He finally was permitted to read all of the paragraph and, by way of explanation, said that "the only crime charged in it which a Democrat could take offense at was that he got drunk at the barroom this Congress allows to run in this basement, and the *Record* shows that members came up here on a previous day of the session and admitted that they were drinkers at it. You have planted the tree, why should you wonder at its fruits?"

But the matter was not to rest here, and its further developments throw light on the incident which coined the phrase, "Where am I at?," the present-tense version.

A probing body before which Watson should be made to prove his charge or go branded a liar being demanded, the Speaker named a "Committee on Congressional Jags," as the body was labelled by amused attaches and news-

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

paper men, composed of Boatner, of Louisiana; Wolverton, of Pennsylvania; Buchanan, of Virginia; Grout, of Vermont; and Simpson, of Kansas, an Alliance man, and nominator of Watson for Speaker.

The committee met on the 30th. Notwithstanding the fact the *Congressional Record* does not carry reports of proceedings before the committees, we are not without a respectable record of what transpired, for the newspapers were represented, as we should naturally expect. *The World* (New York), particularly, went into detail.

Chairman Boatner put Mr. Watson on the stand. He testified he had seen two members reel on the floor during the free silver fight, and that during the Noyes-Rockwell contest election case (from New York) before the House, he had seen a member delivering a lengthy speech while in a state of maudlin intoxication.

Congressman Otis, of Kansas, testified he heard a member making a speech on the Noyes-Rockwell case, that he appeared intoxicated, that he became confused during his deliverance and inquired of the Speaker: "Where am I at?"

Miss Bessie Dwyer, a pretty young woman, was the cause of a stir when she took the stand. She testified she was in the gallery during the Noyes-Rockwell debate and noticed a member who appeared to be drunk during his remarks. She said he repeatedly drank from a cup on the desk before him and she judged it was whiskey.

Mr. Watson, who was now pacing up and down the floor, with his arms folded, put up seven Congressmen who testified they had observed members, on one or the other of the occasions above referred to, who appeared drunk.

“MR. SPEAKER, WHERE WAS I AT?”

A number of witnesses who said they saw no drunkenness on the occasions in question were offered. Then Representative James E. Cobb, of Alabama, appeared upon the scene.

“Gentlemen,” he said, “if you will let me say so, I have no objection to the mention of my name in this connection. It is quite clear from the circumstantial statements made that I am the one referred to by Mr. Watson. If not, I ask him to repudiate the statement.”

Mr. Watson said he had not declared at any time that Judge Cobb, or any other particular Congressman, had appeared on the floor drunk or had made any foolish remark thereon; that his book was dealing with a general situation which was a reproach to the Congress.

Mr. Oates, of Alabama, then stated that during Judge Cobb’s speech on the Noyes-Rockwell case he became “very earnest and somewhat excited. He became exhausted and I think a member of the House sent him a drink, probably of whiskey. Judge Cobb sipped it several times and it may have had a slightly stimulating effect upon him. He had several sharp clashes with Col. O’Ferrall. He was not drunk nor reeling around the aisles as this charge states.”

The hearing proceeded on August 2nd, when, upon Chairman Boatner’s insistence that Watson say whether he meant to injure Cobb and upon Watson’s reiteration that he had not said anything about Cobb and was not talking about Cobb or any other member in especial, Watson told Boatner he was not confining himself to the neutral position of chairman, was acting as a partisan and that if he didn’t like it he would give him personal satisfaction.

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

The gentleman from Alabama (Cobb) took the stand, read a report of his speech, and said:

"Now, if there is any rambling about that or maudlin drunkenness, I am not able to discover it. That preceded and followed immediately upon the question I asked the Speaker. It was my purpose to be jocular and I wanted to maintain the good humor of my colleagues as far as my opponents were concerned. . . . I was suffering from an attack of the grippe and throat trouble. I had told the employee in our retiring room to send me a cup of beef tea. From time to time, as I proceeded with the argument, I would call a page and send him back for some of the tea."

The World account was by no means considerate of Mr. Watson's side of the controversy, as its tone amply showed, but the gentleman from Georgia got a better deal at the hands of Alfred Henry Lewis (famous author later), who represented another New York daily.

Examination of the *Record* does not reveal that Cobb used any such interrogation as "Mr. Speaker, where was I at?" This does not mean that he did not use it, as the expression, in the confusion of debate, could have failed of being recorded; or it could have been deleted, as all such instances of bad grammar are.

The *Record* does show on April 19th, during the debate on the Noyes-Rockwell case, and while Mr. Lawson, of Georgia, was speaking, the following interruption:

MR. WATSON. The great confusion seems to arise behind the seats.

The SPEAKER. The point is well taken. The House
[244]

"MR. SPEAKER, WHERE WAS I AT?"

will please be in order. Gentlemen in the rear of the seats will please preserve order, or retire to the cloak room. The confusion comes largely from the rear of the seats.

There is nothing in the *Record*, of course, indicating whether the confusion was caused by boisterous members who had imbibed freely at the bar.

A majority report by Boatner, Wolverton and Buchanan, condemning Watson, was made; a minority report upholding him was made by Simpson; and another minority report, with the view that Watson was not guilty of any derogation of any particular member, was made by Grout.

Watson considered that, regardless of how much aggrieved certain members might be, he had aroused a sentiment soon to be heard from. He was not in error, for on the day after the probe closed a prominent Boston minister, one C. J. Ryder, secretary of a benevolent association who frequently visited Washington, wrote him congratulating him for his bold stand, saying the day of judgment must come upon those who endorsed the disgusting scenes in and around the Congressional bar. A few years later it was abolished.

The reports on the Watson charges came among the last of the proceedings; and on August 5th the first session adjourned.

CHAPTER XXVIII

POLITICS AND DANGER

NOTWITHSTANDING the fact that he had categorically and vehemently declared on the floor of Congress his right to espouse reforms, however revolutionary, the very declaration of which had put him in Congress, the hatred he had engendered there by virtue of the rift he had caused in Democratic ranks, and the fear of one in Republican ranks, evidenced by the unanimity with which the "Mr. Speaker, where was I at?" episode was seized upon to discredit him, worked an organized warfare on Watson which was extended from the national capital to Georgia. The district Mr. Watson represented was "gerrymandered" by the Democrats and two counties it did not embrace when he was elected—Hancock and Wilkinson—were put in it. Mr. Watson, of course, had to run again in the 1892 election.

When he returned to Thomson in August, Mr. Watson was met by four or five thousand of his wildly enthusiastic supporters. Borne upon shoulders to a carriage decorated with flowers, he was driven to a stand in a pine grove where Alexander H. Stephens made his last speech in McDuffie County. Amid the cheers of a throng now ready to fight for him, he arraigned the Democratic Party "for its violations of platform pledges and its departure from Jeffersonian principles."

POLITICS AND DANGER

He now entered upon what has been called, probably with full justice, the most heated campaign in Georgia politics. Denounced as a traitor to the Democratic Party by its adherents who sought to do him personal violence, and guarded by loyal friends who left everything to defend him, it was indeed a campaign which conditions cannot often duplicate.

The Republican Party, in national convention at Minneapolis in June, had nominated President Harrison for another term. The Democratic National Convention, in Chicago, the same month, renominated Cleveland.

The national People's Party was launched with a platform and ticket on July 4th at Omaha. It nominated James B. Weaver, of Iowa, for President, and James G. Field, of Virginia, for Vice-President.

State organization had preceded in some States and now rapidly followed in others. In Georgia Watson could have secured the People's Party nomination for Governor, but he would never leave the Congressional race until it had been fought out—until his enemies were whipped, or he was whipped. The third party offered W. L. Peek, for Governor, and a full ticket of candidates for other offices.

Mr. Watson was now running as a People's Party candidate. The Democrats brought out J. C. C. Black, of Augusta, an excellent choice. Mr. Watson challenged to joint debate. It was accepted, Mr. Black meeting him five times. One of the meetings was in Thomson in September. Though he had been howled down in Augusta in his effort to speak there, Mr. Watson opened his deliverance with a request "that the honorable gentleman from Richmond County be given a respectful hearing."

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

Mr. Black had tried on each occasion in his own camp to secure the same respect for Mr. Watson.

Just before the speaking, Miss Lulu Pearce, in behalf of the women, presented Mr. Watson with a silk banner bearing his picture, a laurel wreath and inscribed: "The Champion of our Rights." Another similar banner was bestowed upon him. He had composed a campaign poem, "The Young Wife's Song," to be sung to the tune of "Bonnie Blue Flag," whose burden was the woes of the country wife under the "existing conditions," which had brought out strong feminine support.

But Richmond County Watson haters invaded even McDuffie, coming in on the train from Augusta. They were appealed to by Black for order, but the interruptions were frequent. A man with a banner kept marching up and down in front of the speaker's stand to the annoyance of Mr. Watson.

"Get that banner out of the way!"

"It's a Black banner, and I'll go where I want to with it."

"I don't care if it's a Black banner; I don't want it in my face when I'm trying to speak."

"'Rah for Black; give it to 'im, boys; traitor," broke loose from a Hancock delegation of disturbers just arrived.

Of course there was rooting for Watson, as the majority here were for him, but such disgraceful disturbance characterized the whole campaign.

A short time before, in Augusta, Mr Watson was howled down and virtually mobbed. In the State Capitol, in Atlanta, in September, it was nearly the same thing. Policemen sat on the speaker's platform, built

POLITICS AND DANGER

over the marble stairs leading up from the first floor, while he spoke, to prevent bodily injury to him. General Weaver, People's Party nominee for President, arrived the next day to speak but cancelled the engagement, the state of feeling was so high.

The State election was in October and the Congressional election in November. Mr. Watson claimed he carried his old counties, except Richmond, of course, where he knew the Augusta vote would defeat him. Richmond had a larger electoral vote than any. In some counties it was close.

However, he lost—was counted out as he said then, said ever after, and as is generally admitted today. The most unbelievable frauds were resorted to in Richmond—as was afterwards proven, admitted and bragged about. There were 45,000 inhabitants in the county. According to the report of the State Comptroller-General, there were only 11,466 qualified voters in the county. Yet by actual count, there were polled therein 12,558 votes. Where did the surplus come from? The writer of this biography heard verification of the Watson charge at the time many years later (1911 in Mr. Watson's rooms in the Kimball House in Atlanta). A man stated to a gathering that in 1892 he helped import negro women from South Carolina (just across the Savannah River), dress them up as men, debauch them with liquor, and vote them "no telling how many times." He was saying, of course, that he was ashamed of it.

In Wilkinson the vote was virtually a tie, but 100 Watson votes were said to have been thrown out. Hancock was declared for Black by 800 majority, but it was afterwards admitted to Mr. Watson by a citizen of that county

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

that there was a majority of 800 votes all right, but it was Watson majority. But mainly the unscrupulous fight on him in Richmond, stopping at no expedient, and knowing no shame, robbed him of his seat in Congress.

Yet the attacks—attempts even to take his life—were breaking out at virtually every place where he spoke. In the midst of one of his speeches in a country county there was a sudden explosion, and a man was seen moving away through the crowd.

“He tried to shoot you, Tom,” called out a voice.

“I probably will be fired at from all sides before this race is over,” was his retort as he continued his speech.

On the train leaving Sparta, where Watson was bitterly hated, a hoodlum who had tried to howl him down, but who did not see Watson on the train, began yelling:

“Hurrah for Black! To hell with Tom Watson, the traitor to the Democratic Party who sold out to the Republicans!”

According to *The Macon Daily Telegraph*, the man suddenly learned where Tom Watson was “at,” for the candidate leaped on him like a tiger, bumping his head against a seat and soundly thrashing him. For this Watson was mobbed and insulted two days later at the depot in Washington, Georgia, when he went there to meet Judge Lawson in debate.

On the day of the State election, a negro preacher who had been campaigning the negro Alliance for Watson, was attacked in Sparta. The leader of the gang told the negro he had come to cut his throat. Several negro men pushed the preacher out of reach of the knife. Immediately pistols were jerked out, and as the negro Alliance leader tried to run, shots were fired at him. He escaped;

POLITICS AND DANGER

but one of the shots, it was reported, struck a Jefferson County white man, resulting some time later in his death.

A mob threatened the negro preacher in Thomson and Mr. Watson was compelled to protect him in his back yard. A mob gathered around Mr. Watson's home, threatening him, and he had to assemble his friends. The "old guard," some 60 strong, mostly farmers, rushed to Thomson (some a distance of 20 miles), armed with rifles. They remained under arms day and night around the Watson home until the Democratic mob was convinced it would get worsted if violence were started. Mr. Watson, all the time, was using every argument possible to avert bloodshed and finally succeeded.

Watson had endeavored to get Black to meet him on the stump for six more debates, which had been tentatively agreed to before the October election. William M. Fleming, Black's manager, published a card saying Black saw no use in any more speaking—that the issues had already been thrashed out. Watson's purpose was to confront him with the "counting out" charge regarding third party men who ran in the State election, and blame the Democrats, as there had not been People's Party managers at all the voting precincts. However, no more debates were held.

High feeling continued, and Governor W. J. Northen had ordered troops to be in readiness in Atlanta and Augusta to "move on" Thomson on the November election day. Special locomotives were kept fired up in round houses to transport them. It did not become necessary to do so. It was reported to Watson, however, that Governor Northen himself had declared in public that Watson ought to be killed.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE AMERICAN RURAL FREE DELIVERY

WHEN the second session of the Fifty-second Congress convened on December 5th, Mr. Watson was prepared to offer anew certain legislation he regarded as highly remedial and needed. He attacked the money problem again, offering "a bill to provide for an increase of the national currency, to provide a method for the distribution of the same by homestead land loans, and to provide for the repayment of said loans." This was a new effort to secure federal loans to farmers. The bill was never reported out by the Ways and Means Committee. His bill to prohibit the further issuance of bonds under the acts of 1875 and 1879, and his "bill to create the office of national inspector of cotton and grain, provide for the issuance of certificates of deposit, for the issuance of post-office money orders thereon, and for the payment and repayment of such orders" saw the same fate.

By no means, however, was an untoward fate to attend every effort at legislation exerted by Mr. Watson; and the author is now about to record what was, as a matter of actual fact, and is today, as a matter of undisputed fact, one of the greatest pieces of legislation ever enacted by the Congress of the United States.

So great, so wide have been the results of this law that there have sprung up year after year since its passage a new crop of "fathers of the Rural Free Delivery." So

AMERICAN RURAL FREE DELIVERY

continuous were these claims, by both Republican and Democratic Congressmen, that on March 15, 1904, Hon. Thomas W. Hardwick, then a Representative from the district Watson had represented, delivered an address in the House, re-inserting the true original law in the *Record*, and upholding the true title of his distinguished constituent.

On June 1, 1892, during the first session, when the Post Office Appropriation Bill was under consideration before the House as a Committee of the Whole House upon the State of the Union, Mr. Watson offered an amendment as follows:

For free delivery service \$10,445,000, of which \$100,000 shall be used in experimental free delivery in the country as distinct from cities and towns.

Just prior to the offering of the Watson amendment, Mr. Livingston, of Georgia, offered an amendment providing for \$100,000 for actual rural free delivery, declaring that the section of the bill providing for free delivery did not say, and similar previous bills had never been construed to mean, that any rural delivery was being provided for. He was ruled out of order because his amendment sought to change the amendment of another member just adopted.

Mr. Watson, to escape a similar fate, offered his amendment as a substitute for the entire section as already amended. The Chair ruled that it was not a substitute. Watson appealed to the judgment of the Committee (the House) on this construction by the Chair, the Chair was sustained, and his amendment was lost.

Now, during the second session, when the Post Office

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

Appropriation Bill was again before the House as a Committee of the Whole House, with Mr. Blanchard, of Louisiana in the chair, Mr. Watson's effort to secure free delivery of mail for the farmers, believing they had as much right to it as the people of the towns and cities, was renewed, on February 17, 1893.

The author does not intend there shall be any mistake, and is reproducing verbatim the proceedings of the House of the above date pertinent to the subject before us, which are found reported upon Pages 1759 and 1760, Volume 24, Part 2, *Congressional Record*:

The Clerk read as follows:

For free-delivery service, including existing experimental free-delivery offices, \$11,254,943.

MR. WATSON. I have an amendment which I send to the desk.

The Clerk read as follows:

Amend the paragraph so as to read as follows:

"For free-delivery service, including existing experimental free-delivery offices, \$11,254,900, of which the sum of \$10,000 shall be applied, under the direction of the Postmaster-General, to experimental free-delivery in rural communities other than towns and villages."

MR. HOLMAN. I reserve a point of order on that.

MR. WATSON. This reduces the expenditure provided for in the bill.

MR. HENDERSON of North Carolina. I desire to reserve a point of order.

The CHAIRMAN. A point of order has already been reserved.

MR. WATSON. Mr. Chairman, the paragraph under consideration provides for the expenditure of \$11,254,943 for free-delivery service. My amendment reduces the amount of that expenditure and simply directs that the

AMERICAN RURAL FREE DELIVERY

Postmaster-General shall apply \$10,000 of the appropriation to experimental free delivery in rural communities.

MR. LOUD. That is already provided for; the gentleman will accomplish nothing by his amendment.

MR. WATSON. It is not provided for in rural districts other than towns and villages.

MR. BUCHANAN of New Jersey. The experiment is going on now.

MR. LOUD. And has been for two years. Nothing can be gained by the gentleman's amendment.

MR. WATSON. There is no experimental service in rural communities other than villages and towns.

MR. BUCHANAN of New Jersey. You mean "truly rural."

MR. WATSON. Yes, sir; the real country.

MR. HOLMAN. I hope the amendment will again be read. It was not understood.

The amendment was again read.

MR. HOLMAN. I think there is some misapprehension as to the law on this subject. I would like to ask the gentleman from North Carolina in charge of this bill what the existing law is?

MR. HENDERSON of North Carolina. There is no law on the subject providing for rural free delivery or experiments in that direction. There is a law which provides for experiments in small towns and villages, and forty-eight of these now have free delivery. That condition is preserved in this bill. But no provision is made for rural free delivery.

MR. WATSON. I understand, Mr. Chairman, that the point of order will not be insisted upon.

The CHAIRMAN. No point of order was submitted; it was only reserved.

MR. WATSON. It was made under a misapprehension of the law.

The CHAIRMAN. The question is on agreeing to the amendment of the gentleman from Georgia.

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

MR. HENDERSON of North Carolina. So far as I am individually concerned, Mr. Chairman, I would have no objection to such an experiment. But I thought it proper to reserve the point of order, not knowing what other gentlemen might think of it.

MR. LOUD. Are you satisfied in your own mind that this is not substantially the present law?

MR. HENDERSON of North Carolina. I am not entirely satisfied.

MR. CALDWELL. There is no provision for rural districts.

MR. HENDERSON of North Carolina. Oh, I am perfectly satisfied that there is no law in regard to experimental delivery in rural districts.

The CHAIRMAN. The question is on agreeing to the amendment of the gentleman from Georgia.

The question was taken; and on a division there were—ayes 49, noes 50.

MR. WATSON. No quorum.

The Chair appointed as tellers Mr. Watson and Mr. Henderson of North Carolina.

MR. WATSON. I would like to have a few moments, with unanimous consent, to make a statement in reference to this matter.

Several Members. Go on.

The CHAIRMAN. Unless by unanimous consent, pending a division no debate is in order.

MR. WATSON. I have asked unanimous consent.

The CHAIRMAN. Is there objection to the gentleman proceeding briefly in explanation of this proposition?

There was no objection.

MR. WATSON. Mr. Chairman——

MR. LOUD. Does the gentleman withdraw the point of no quorum?

The CHAIRMAN. The Chair does not so understand.

MR. LOUD. Then I shall object.

AMERICAN RURAL FREE DELIVERY

Several Members. Too late.

MR. CALDWELL. I make the point of order that the gentleman is too late. Unanimous consent has been given.

The CHAIRMAN. The Chair thinks the gentleman is too late.

MR. WATSON. Mr. Chairman, the present law provides for an experimental free delivery in rural communities; but as I understand it—and the chairman of the committee, the gentleman from North Carolina [MR. HENDERSON], makes the same statement to the House—the law has been construed to mean cities, towns, and villages, and there are now in operation experimental free deliveries in certain towns and villages.

The law expressly provides for rural communities, and it seems to me where the general laws make such provision there is no hardship in taking a small amount from this appropriation, only \$10,000, and appropriating it for experimental free delivery in absolutely rural communities, that is to say, in the country pure and simple, amongst the farmers, in those neighborhoods where they do not get their mail more than once in every two weeks, and where these deserving people have settled in communities one hundred years old and do not receive a newspaper that is not two weeks behind the times.

The amendment proposes not to increase the appropriation; it actually diminishes it by a nominal amount, but takes \$10,000 of it to be provided for experimental free delivery in absolutely rural communities, instead of towns and villages, which the authorities construe to mean rural communities. In other words, I think that a part of the money ought to be spent in the country, where the law provides it shall be spent, and having made this statement, if we can have another division, and the committee is against my amendment, I will yield to its will.

MR. HENDERSON of North Carolina. Mr. Chairman,
[257]

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

the only law on the subject at all is in the very language used in this appropriation bill:

For free-delivery service, including existing experimental free-delivery offices.

That is all the law now on the statute books in regard to this question.

I did not want the statement of the gentleman from Georgia in regard to there being a law on the statutes as to rural free delivery to go without correction.

MR. WATSON. Mr. Chairman, this delivery in the small towns and villages is called rural free delivery.

MR. HENDERSON of North Carolina. But as a matter of fact there is no law except what is stated here in this appropriation bill.

MR. HOLMAN. Mr. Chairman, I would like to say a word about this matter. The district which I have the honor to represent is situated in the midst of a great intelligent body of farmers, and so far as I am informed the sentiment is generally that this would be an unnecessary expense. It has been discussed somewhat in the public prints.

This amendment means an increased appropriation of \$10,000. Upon its face it simply diverts \$10,000 from the proper fund, but it has of course got to be made up. I am very confident that the people of this country do not care to have the taxes imposed upon them increased by what they deem to be an unnecessary expense.

A Member. Do I understand the gentleman from Indiana to say there is no circulation of mail among the farmers of his district? [Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. The committee is dividing. Debate is not in order. Does the gentleman from Georgia [MR. WATSON] insist upon this point of no quorum?

MR. WATSON. I stated that if we could have a rising vote, I would submit to the decision of the committee.

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection, the Chair will again put the amendment to the committee.

AMERICAN RURAL FREE DELIVERY

The committee again divided, and there were—ayes 79, noes 41.

Accordingly the amendment was agreed to.

As will be seen, Mr. Watson's measure was more fundamental than even he thought, for while he knew that there was no free delivery of mail in rural communities as a fact, he understood that the words "free delivery in rural communities" were already in the law, but were construed to mean towns and villages off the railroads. However, as Mr. Henderson of North Carolina informed the House, the word, "rural," was neither in the existing law nor in the bill under consideration. It got in there for the first time in the history of this country in the Watson Amendment. When it was agreed to and the bill passed the House and Senate with the amendment in it, as it did, and was approved by the President, it became mandatory upon the Postmaster-General to spend \$10,000 upon experimental free delivery of mail in the actually rural sections. He did so—first in Maryland—and so practicable the departure was seen to be that he urged upon Congress an increased appropriation from year to year, until today, of course, the system is universal throughout the country, and requires millions of dollars annually to maintain it. According to the reports of the Post Office Department, there has never been an appropriation made which yielded so great a return in general benefit to the nation as that for rural free delivery. The fact that Mr. Watson made the initial expenditure only \$10,000, in order to prevent stirring up objection, merely reflects credit upon the ingenuity which could overcome an obstacle by which it was once overcome.

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

Of course, it is altogether unnecessary to discuss the untold cultural and other good that has come out of the law. Let it be enough to say, in honor of its creator, that by it he did more constructive good to the class he represented and served than all his colleagues from Georgia in the 52nd Congress, with all those that have succeeded them, combined, have done. And just how many more from other States could be legitimately added, the author will leave to conjecture, rather than give to assertion.

In true form, faith and valor, Mr. Watson had acquitted himself like a man upon all the pledges he had made his people, and had done even more.

And he was not without some recompense. Alfred Henry Lewis wrote to his paper in New York: "Altogether he is a better American and a better man than either Hobart or McKinley, thinks less of himself and more of the people, and a syndicate could no more buy Watson or own Watson than it could buy or own a continent."

CHAPTER XXX

PROGRESS BARRED

AFTER leaving Congress in 1893, Mr. Watson went upon a speaking tour of Georgia from Tennessee to the sea and from the Savannah to the Chattahoochee Rivers, to inculcate the principles of Jeffersonian democracy. It was a propaganda campaign. He turned down lecture engagements at \$250 each (good money in those days) and refused the Newsome murder case in Washington County at a fee of \$5,000. He gave his strength wholly to this work—the hardest and most exhausting he ever did, he declared.

He contested the election of Black, on the ground of illegal votes, in the Fifty-third Congress, but the Committee on Elections made a unanimous report against him, finding that there was not sufficient proof before it to warrant the voiding of the commission of Black. There was not an adherent of the People's Party on the committee, though there were such in Congress. When the committee's report came before the House, Hon. Lafe Pence, a People's Party man, made strenuous endeavor to secure Watson a hearing on the floor, but failed. It had been difficult to obtain evidence in Richmond County, but Mr. Watson had laid the case before the committee as conclusively as he could.

The House adopted the committee's report and seated Black. Watson later charged that many Democrats

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

dodged the vote and that the case was decided when there was not a quorum present.

The State Convention of the People's Party (now generally called the Populist Party) met in May 1894. Mr. Watson was elected chairman of the convention and also of its State Executive Committee.

Hon. James K. Hines, who had moved to Atlanta from Washington County, after having been Solicitor-General of the Middle Judicial Circuit when Herschel V. Johnson was its Judge, and then Judge thereof himself, was nominated for Governor.

The Democrats nominated William Y. Atkinson. His opponent for the nomination was General C. A. Evans, widely known Methodist minister; and when Atkinson won it there was considerable dissatisfaction, causing Watson to entertain high hopes of a Democratic defection to Populist ranks, seeing that Judge Hines, besides being a strong Populist leader, was a prominent Methodist.

To effectively reach voters in the cities and towns, Mr. Watson, on July 4th, launched *The Daily Press* in Atlanta at No. 8 South Broad Street. The weekly *People's Party Paper*, of course, continued to take care of the rural voters. Watson again entered the race for Congress against Black in the Tenth District.

Then ensued another campaign memorable for whiskey, repeating and even bloodshed. Democrats endeavored to break up Populist meetings and Populists met with pistols on their hips. In Columbus where Hines and Watson, who were touring some sixty counties together, were scheduled to speak, a crowd assembled in the hall ahead of time to prevent the speaking; and were on the point

PROGRESS BARRED

of throwing a "Pop" out of a third-story window when other Pops arrived in the nick of time. A sharp knife was slidden up the back of one of the would-be ejectors, just as the Pop was hoisted high for the trip through the window, and he fell over in a bloody heap as the frightened Pop was dropped to the floor. The speaking was held.

Atkinson challenged Hines to joint debate. The latter accepted, provided Atkinson would agree for Hines to have a manager at every poll in the coming election, to prevent fraud, Atkinson to be allowed one also. Atkinson refused to reply, and no debate was held.

In the State election in October, Judge Hines received 96,000 votes by Democratic count. In many precincts votes for him were thrown out on flimsy, technical grounds—or on no grounds. Atkinson was declared winner by about 20,000 majority, after returns from some forty counties had been held back for more than two weeks. It was heard on all sides—and is generally conceded by the staunchest Democrats today—that Hines was fairly elected but counted out.

The Democrats, aroused by the excellent showing the Populists had made in the State election, fought with increased energy to prevent any Populist victory in November. Watson's prediction of hard times "because of the Republican policy of the Cleveland administration," which began March 4, 1893, had come true, or was believed to have come true; and that also had to be offset. The fight was terrific and no stone was left unturned to beat Watson. He carried most of the counties in his district—McDuffie, Columbia, Lincoln, Warren, Taliaferro, Jefferson, Glasscock, Washington and Wilkinson—while Black carried only Richmond and Hancock, Wat-

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

son claimed; but Black was declared elected. Watson charged repeating and other kinds of fraud, applying especially to Richmond, where, he said, the ballot boxes contained 18,000 votes, and the county only 12,000 voters. Watson was credited with only 2,400 of them, Black's majority thus being far in excess of the voting population of the county, as was claimed. Watson did not claim that he carried Richmond, but this did not justify corrupt voting.

Watson prepared to make another contest, believing he would fare better in the new Congress which would be overwhelmingly Republican; but decided against the move, not relishing the prospect of owing his seat to the Republicans. He proposed to Black, through the newspapers, the appointment of a commission to purge the boxes of illegal votes, the legal ones to decide who won. Mr. Black, who admitted then that there had been illegal votes cast (and who has since admitted it in a letter to the present writer), though he had nothing to do with procuring them, declined the proposition; but made a counter proposition that he would accept his commission as a member of the Fifty-fourth Congress but would resign it, effective March 4, 1895, the day following the end of his term in the Fifty-third Congress, whenever Watson agreed within the time allowed by law for notice of contest to refer the matter back to the people to determine by a new election who should represent them in the Fifty-fourth Congress.

Judge Hines and other Watson friends strongly advised against this step, urging him to go ahead with another contest, and reminding him that he would only be counted out again. However, Watson agreed to the

PROGRESS BARRED

Black proposal, with the understanding that the new election would be held within thirty days from March 4, 1895, as under the law the Governor would have to order an election to fill the vacancy if a longer period of time expired, which election would be open to any man in the district.

Accordingly Mr. Black's resignation was placed in the hands of Governor Atkinson, who ordered a special election, to be held, however, on August 12, 1895, to fill the vacancy. As was expected Watson lost again, by some 3,500 majority, which reseatd Black in Congress. Again Watson went before that body with a contest, and again he lost. He decided that he had just as well let the Congressional race alone.

On January 4, 1895, Mr. Watson stopped *The Daily Press*, it having lost him \$4,000. The weekly, now self-sustaining, was continued. The latter had been moved to 401½ North Forsyth Street, and then to 49 West Mitchell Street, where also the daily was being published when discontinued. His intention to re-issue the daily the next October was not carried out.

Other discouraging events were crowding upon him. On June 12th Mr. Watson's father died in Thomson after a long illness. Mrs. Watson's adopted parents had passed away also, Mrs. Durham on January 11, 1893 and Dr. Durham on May 1, 1894.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN OF 1896

WHETHER through fear of disruption within its own ranks or as a natural outcome of the trend of the times, the Democratic Party was rapidly adopting the principles of the insurgents. There were insurgents within it and there were the Populists. That there was insurgency, and of no negligible kind, the Democratic leaders, who had been wont to scoff at the Watsonites, now clearly saw. Furthermore they were preparing for more of it. To maintain the party's strength the reform measures had to be openly advocated.

By 1896 free silver had been advocated in the Democratic conventions of thirty States, ten having endorsed the gold standard. Georgia had declared for silver by a vote of more than five to one. A quite different tune was now sounded by the conservatives. The very heart and soul of the reform movement was sweeping the Democratic ranks. In *The People's Party Paper* and in interviews to the press in general Watson had declared reform a victor, but charged that the Democratic administration of Cleveland had, with a quite beautiful symmetry, passed all the Republican legislation that Wall Street or the Republicans could have desired. He warned Populists not to be led astray by Democratic promises.

The Democratic National Convention met in Chicago in the summer, wholly in the air as to who was to be its

PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN OF 1896

next standard bearer. How William Jennings Bryan got the Presidential nomination with his "Cross of Gold" speech is too well known to require recounting here. Arthur Sewall, a railroad president and national banker of Maine, was nominated for Vice-President.

In July the National Convention of the People's Party was held in St. Louis. The southern delegates went pledged to "stay in the middle of the road" and to consider no proposal of uniting with the Democrats. Watson had warned against a return to the old party, saying it would mean their undoing "because the party had proven its insincerity, and you will get nothing at its hands nor will your principles."

But so pronounced had been the adoption of Populistic faith in Democratic organization, that the delegates from the North and West were ready to fuse with the Democrats in order to carry reform doctrine to the nation with a bolder front.

There were delegates from the East—from eleven eastern States, in fact—which had less than twelve per cent. of the convention vote, because the Populist yardstick was how strong the party was in the State represented. These were about evenly divided on the question of fusion. It soon became apparent that western and northwestern delegates wanted Bryan named to head the ticket.

Anti-fusionists from the South refused to accept Bryan and merge their party with the Democratic unless a Populist were named on the ticket. They agreed that the Populist could go in second place, Watson being their choice. Judge Hines was openly against fusion.

Representations were made to the Populists by Demo-

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

cratic leaders, who were attending for the purpose of shaping their own party's course, that if the Populists would nominate Bryan for President, they would see that Sewall's name was taken down and Watson's put on in his stead on the Democratic ticket—thereby making the two tickets identical. These Democratic leaders had no party authority to make any such representations, which meant, of course, that they were not binding. The representations were accepted, however, as a pledge.

The Watson men then wired their leader at Thomson whether he would consent to a fusion whereby Bryan would be nominated for President and Watson for Vice-President by the Populists, the resignation of Sewall to be secured so as to make Watson also the Democratic nominee. At his home in Thomson Mr. Watson struggled with the problem. He was against fusion and had preached that position as from the house tops. The telegrams kept coming—the urge more insistent. Finally he wired a reluctant consent.

The Watson men then declared they were ready to nominate, but would nominate for Vice-President first. Senator W. V. Allen, of Nebraska, was permanent chairman. Senator James K. Jones, Chairman of the Democratic National Committee, was in attendance upon the Populist convention. He had been seeking to engineer a fusion, but had been open in his disparagement of the southern delegates and their anti-fusion policy. He wired Mr. Bryan at Lincoln, Nebraska, that the convention was going to nominate a Vice-President first, "and if it is not Sewall I favor your declination." Mr. Bryan wired back: "If Sewall is not nominated, withdraw my

PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN OF 1896

name.” This shows there was no real authority for representing to Watson that he would be put in Sewall’s place. Of course, Mr. Watson did not know this, or he would never have consented to the fusion.

When the convention met on the night of July 24th, Delegate Howard, of Alabama, rose and in a brief but eulogistic strain, put in nomination the name of Thomas E. Watson. Seconding speeches were made by Delegates Johnson, of California; Stockwell, of Louisiana; Doster, of Kansas; Murphey, of Georgia, and others. The hour was growing late when a delegate moved that Watson be made the unanimous choice of the convention. As he did so the lights went out, but the job was virtually done, and as they came back on Watson was unanimously voted the nominee. At 4 o’clock the next afternoon Bryan was nominated to head the ticket.

Of course, Sewall’s name was not taken down—his resignation would have been necessary, and there was not a Democratic leader who meant to ask for it, last of all Mr. Bryan, who had already voiced his view on that question. The Populists made a demand on the Democrats that Sewall come down for Watson, but the demand was refused.

To those who had been foolish enough to believe that Sewall would resign to consummate fusion, Mr. Watson could only say: “I told you so.” He was really not surprised. It was only because it had been represented to him that the convention would split if Bryan were not named for President—and it was to prevent this ominous disruption—that he wired his consent to fusion. On July 31st he said in *The People’s Party Paper*:

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

"There will be disappointment throughout the ranks of the People's Party at the failure of our national convention to nominate a 'middle-of-the-road ticket.'

"The position of this paper upon that subject has not changed. We thought before the convention met, and we think now, that the welfare of our party, and of the principles it represents, demanded that we nominate our own ticket, and put upon that ticket two Populists, tried and true."

There had been a faction at the convention that favored for a time a straight Populist ticket of S. F. Norton, of Illinois, and Frank Burkitt, of Mississippi. This fact also had not been communicated to Mr. Watson by those staunch friends of his, who thought they saw a chance to make him Vice-President of the United States.

But Populists were not alone in sending up the cry of indignation at the failure to put Watson on the Democratic ticket. Benjamin M. Blackburn, editor of *The Atlanta Commercial* (Democratic) declared that the Democrats had urged Bryan on the Populists after Watson had been nominated, and owed it to them to accept their nominee. The incident caused *The Commercial* to become a Populist organ. T. R. R. Cobb, one of the most influential Democrats, viewed the matter as discreditable, and organized Bryan-Watson clubs. John Temple Graves, brilliant young newspaper man, Democrat (and a gold one at that), said:

"I support Watson, because I feel that the Democratic Party is bound in honor to support him—bound by the contract, solemn and honorable—implied in the presence and attitude of Jones and Bland at the Populist Convention at St. Louis.

PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN OF 1896

"I support Watson because he represents a party that had educated our Democratic to a due consideration of the welfare of the common people. I say it fearlessly, and it can not be denied, that reforms for which the masses have been clamoring for years—whether it be silver or labor or income tax or popular rights or resistance to government by injunction—had never been written, and might never have been written, into a Democratic platform, until the Populist party, 1,800,000 strong, thundered in the ears of Democratic leaders the announcement that a mighty multitude demanded these reforms. And among the men who have molded, through storm and struggle, the party that has educated ours to popular liberty, Tom Watson, of Georgia, stands easily first and foremost of them all."

Though he believed and openly declared that the Democratic managers had schemed to absorb and capitalize the Populist movement, without conceding anything in return, and though it was plain he could not hope to gain anything for himself, Mr. Watson laid everything else aside and campaigned the West for the Bryan-Watson ticket. Whether he felt that Watson had not been dealt with squarely or not, it is certain that Mr. Bryan avoided him, refusing even to go into doubtful States, like Kentucky, with him for a joint campaign, and he lost that State by only 142 votes. Watson went into Bryan's home State, Nebraska, and carried it for Bryan, the only time it ever went for him.

On this tour (in September) he conferred in his rooms at the Southern Hotel in St. Louis with George F. Washburn, of Chicago; M. C. Rankin, of Terre Haute; and H. W. Reed, of Georgia, Populist managers. The meet-

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

ing was strictly star-chamber, but *The Republic* and other newspapers succeeded in learning that the Populist leaders did not mean to support Sewall; and that action would be taken regarding States which had disregarded the national Populist nominees and were working for the Democratic ticket strictly—such as Kansas and Colorado. Mr. Reed was on the tour with Mr. Watson. Requests had been pouring in for the Vice-Presidential nominee to tour the entire West to the Pacific. He toured as many States as time would allow, his engagements in Kansas and Colorado being particularly full.

Just before this tour *The World* (New York) wired him if he would come down in favor of Sewall, if a cabinet post were offered him. His reply was that he would not—that he was in the race to the end. At *The World's* request, he furnished it signed articles on the situation, allowing *The World* exclusive advance publication of his campaign editorials for his own paper. Some of these were in answer to Jones, Democratic National Committee Chairman, on the fusion incident and Sewall.

In Georgia the Populist State Convention met in August and declared itself behind Mr. Watson, its temporary chairman, in his refusal to endorse votes for Sewall. "No Watson, no Bryan" was the slogan.

Judge Hines was made permanent chairman, and a large coterie endeavored to re-nominate him for Governor. All contests finally wore themselves out and Seaborn Wright was nominated.

The Democratic managers were given a final opportunity to agree for the Presidential vote in the State to be Bryan and Watson. They refused. Whereupon, the

PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN OF 1896

Populists withdrew their ticket and left the field in Georgia to Bryan and McKinley.

For years after the election Mr. Watson contented that Bryan would have been elected "had there been complete coöperation of the Democratic and Populist Parties." He said that in the doubtful States a change of 27,000 votes would have given Bryan the electoral majority; and that had the two parties worked together squarely, success to their ticket would have been the inevitable result.

Regardless of this view, the political reforms so zealously championed had come to stay.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE VICTORY OF PRINCIPLE

"HOORAY, he's ruined. Hooray, we've ruined Tom Watson."

It was the cry of exultation that went up from the ring in Augusta. And so it seemed indeed at the time. Repeated failure to break through the wall of opposition, fortified in large part by a criminal hate, had convinced the multitude that Watson was finished. It certainly looked that way. Defeated at every turn, he had not a scrap of ground to stand upon by way of holding out his leadership further. And well enough did he recognize it—admit it. When members of the Old Guard came around him, to contrive means of upholding their cause, there was little that could be said in hope. All understood it well enough—understood that the point had been reached where time alone could work the longed-for results.

Why was his defeat? If his principles had been largely adopted; if many Democrats and the Populists were together on almost all the essentials of the new reform, what was the reason for Watson's defeat—why couldn't the crusader continue to lead the procession? Where was there reason or explanation for this anomaly of the supplanted leader in a cause that went marching on?

The answer is not to be found in the explication of ordinary change. For while there were those who, in

THE VICTORY OF PRINCIPLE

their lack of courage, were willing to offer excuse for a political crime in the manufactured charge that Watson's defeat was the outcome of "his treason to the Democratic Party" and "his seeking the negro vote," they were nowhere near striking distance of the real cause of the Watson reversal of the '90's. Indeed, all knew well enough that his departure from the Democratic Party was open, above-board, fully explained, fully vouched for; and that Populism not only had not commanded more of the negro vote than had Democracy, but had not even been in existence when negro Alliance organization began.

And the fact that Thomas E. Watson had protected a negro politician in his back yard, in the teeth of imminent personal danger to himself, to prevent the negro's being mobbed, only proved beyond peradventure that he intended to meet every issue in the battle, even in the heat of the day.

Then where are we to seek the answer to this defeat and the exultation with which it was celebrated? It lies in the especial tone of that human psychology which revels in untruth, and hates him who would so declare. Conceived in stupidity and brought forth in hoodlumism, this species of mentality stalks itself as the man who replies to him on the platform who preaches at it, denounces it and defies it, with a sickening grin now when he is seen, and then cowardly joins in criminal practices when he is not seen. The only thing you can do with this species of mind is to let time eradicate it from the face of the earth.

And no man ever admitted this with more unction than did Thomas E. Watson.

No; even if we were to grant that leaving the Democratic Party, as he had a perfect right to do, and fully

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

justified himself in doing, caused Tom Watson's defeat, no man outside of bedlam would contend that his doing so explained or justified the stuffing of ballot boxes against him, the voting of debauched South Carolina negro women against him, the repeating against him and the deliberate throwing out of votes cast in favor of him. The People's Party was a party and had a right by law at the polls, as much as the Democratic Party. If they couldn't beat him fairly—as they knew they could not—nobody but the political crook and the hoodlum wanted to beat him any other way. No man who was simply opposed to the Populist Party, its doctrines, organization and candidates, cared to stuff ballot boxes and do criminal acts. To do these he had to be imbued with a hatred foreign to any set of principles. And that hatred grew out of the natural aversion of some men to the man who is what he is and is not afraid to say so, and not afraid to denounce openly what he believes is wrong.

If we wanted any further proof that this is what beat Watson in 1892 and 1894, we would have but to remember that he was in fact concededly elected each time, by that same vote which elected him in 1890; and that hence the organized repeating and counting out and vote buying with liquor and its adjuncts "defeated" him—which manifestedly could not have proceeded from any upright and principled opposition.

Mr. Watson had been urged by many of his friends to stay in the Democratic Party and fight for the reforms. It was urged upon him that it was useless to begin a separate organization which would not only have the Republican Party to withstand but also the Democratic. They urged upon him also "the harm that would come

THE VICTORY OF PRINCIPLE

from breaking up the solid South." When he refused to listen to this argument, some charged him with the design of destroying the southern party ranks for his own ends. He was accused of "treason to Democracy for private political preferment."

Even if Mr. Watson entertained the purpose ascribed to him or was actuated by it, which we are by no means warranted in concluding from any fact or circumstance, his reply was abundantly sufficient to justify his course, which, as all students in government by party have since declared, has been, itself, abundantly justified.

To each and all of these suggestions and objections, Mr. Watson replied that it was impossible to reform a party from within, and he pointed to the fact that "Luther succeeded where Erasmus failed, because he got out or was kicked out of the Romish Church." In so doing he did not disparage the reform work of Erasmus; he merely pointed out that it would never have brought about Protestantism—a complete departure, a thorough reform.

He told his advisers that the Democratic Party and later the Republican Party would no more have incorporated the reforms they did incorporate with just the two organizations in being than would John of England have granted the Magna Charta without the organization of the barons.

What was there to make them do so? Were they not already sufficiently dissimilar to exist a thousand years together without working a change? No; there had to be something to make them wake up to reform before they would do it. What must that be? Why, insurgency, insurgency organized, and organized with sufficient strength to make the old line parties fear for their existence.

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

"But you cannot perpetuate another party?" they remonstrated.

"What difference does it make whether I perpetuate one or not, whether I keep one alive a decade or not, whether the insurgent party is even to be remembered or not—if the principles live, though under another banner? What difference will it make to the people, their cause and their good, how these reforms are attained, if they are attained, whether they get them in legislation by the Populist, the Democratic or the Republican Party? The reform is the thing—the party matters nothing."

And when he had so said, he would repeat with all the conviction at his command:

✓ "But there has got to be a new, an independent organization to make them do it—and that's what the People's Party is."

(There never was a time when Mr. Watson believed a third party would be a permanent thing.) He believed that eventually, as had occurred before in the history of the United States, issues would settle down into two camps—regardless of the names they should have. Party history proved this was veritably a part of the economy of politics. The record of the old Whig and Republican parties, and their destinies, showed this to be the case; and the modern Democratic Party was born of and took the place of the old Republican Party. And there is one thing which stares us in the face as an unavoidable fact, and that is that many of the major doctrines of the People's Party do live—and live just as vitally as if that third party were itself alive—not only in the platforms of the two major parties, but in the law itself.

THE VICTORY OF PRINCIPLE

In the very month that brought defeat to the Populist and Democratic Presidential tickets in 1896, Mr. Watson returned to his law practice. Throughout the sensational political days of the '90's the demand for his presence in the court room had continued, in fact, increased.

In November 1896 he went back to Screven County to represent Sol and Corrie Zeigler, charged with the murder of the sheriff of the county, L. B. Brooker. The facts made the case dramatic and the array of counsel made it a contest.

The testimony brought out that in September 1894, during an outbreak in Screven that had to be curbed with troops, Brooker had a fight with George Zeigler, prominent farmer and father of the defendants. The sheriff, boarding the train, pointed his pistol at Zeigler through the window and shot him to death, the latter thinking the fight was over. One Sunday evening in October 1895 the Zeigler boys went to a Baptist camp ground (near where Mr. Watson had taught school as a boy), saw Brooker going toward a buggy to go home, followed and shot him down from behind, then shot him again, with rifles. A pistol was found on Brooker's body. According to the statements of the defendants on the stand, Brooker, on the day they killed him, was drinking and had guns in his buggy with which he meant to kill them. These circumstances, they said, were reported to them by one John Hughes.

Mr. Watson offered nothing but the defendants' statements. The state put up eight witnesses. For the state appeared H. D. D. Twiggs, Solicitor-General E. K. Overstreet and an Attorney Evans. With Mr. Watson for the

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

defense were the firm of Williams, Oliver & Overstreet, H. S. White and Wm. L. Mathews.

Mr. Watson, who steered the line of defense, used again the point of anticipation. He drove home his contention that a man did not have to wait until his adversary was immediately upon him before he could take the necessary steps to save his own life; that the law would be a mockery of intelligence and common sense if it meant a man must wait until his foe had used his own pleasure about the particular minute he intended to shoot before taking the steps necessary to protect his own life—that it didn't mean that and didn't say that. He argued further that when the law said a man was entitled to take the steps necessary to protect his own life, those steps might logically and fairly include the slaying of the adversary. When Brooker started toward that buggy, the defendants had a right to conclude he was going to get a weapon with which to kill them—"after having deliberately murdered their father," he argued; and the fact that Brooker was armed when shot down, a fact which might negative the conclusion that he was going to the buggy to get a gun, it must be remembered, was not known to the defendants. They had a right to assume Brooker was going for a gun, in view of the threats communicated to them, he further urged. He also succeeded in considerably discrediting some of the state's witnesses.

Regardless of the degree of merit, or lack of merit, in this argument, Watson came out again victor over his greatest adversary, Twiggs; for after trials that consumed parts of two weeks, the jury returned a verdict of not guilty in each case.

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE LESSON OF HISTORY

TIME must take its course, and in its passing the spirit of reform must change only in its method. The same yearning for an emancipated political thought engendered among the masses, the same hope of a brighter day when the common people would think for themselves and know when they were being served or betrayed, the same faith in the future, Mr. Watson still entertained. Yet he would have to wait, change was slow, the time must be bided.

Would he wait in idleness? Was there nothing he could do to implant that especial truth, the eventual triumph of which was his greatest service to mankind: the truth that that people alone is free which thinks for itself, and demands the right to think for itself on all questions affecting it? He would not. To arouse the popular consciousness to the rights, powers and duties of the masses he would enter upon another expedient, and one which was to rank as second to none among all the achievements of his versatile mind. He would add to that array of labors already performed the lesson of history.

Mr. Watson held that the reason history repeated itself was because the people were given to forgetting its record; the reason abuses arose with perennial flourish was because they were no sooner removed from the world at large than from men's minds. In direct ratio with their remembrance was the difficulty of their reappearance.

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

So the lesson of history—the edict of nature—must be taught anew. Perhaps his people would remember that, if they forgot him. Be that lesson ever so much at variance with any of his political party planks, it would not, could not ever conflict with the burden of his preachment: that reform springs from the people, not from their governments.

There probably are not ten men today who remember a thin octavo book, in brown cloth, published in Atlanta in 1896 and entitled *The Story of France*. It was a reprint of some sketches on French history written by Thomas E. Watson for his *People's Party Paper*. Those who read the paper read some or all of the sketches, but not many persons ever saw the little book. The sketches—they were not many—were discontinued when collected and issued in book form. The paper continued for several years, but the author of the sketches was now giving none of his time to it. He was shut away from the world in the front, bay-window room on the first floor of his home on Lumpkin Street in Thomson—his library. He was writing what American and British critics were to proclaim the most dramatic study of the French people ever penned. It would bear the same title as the sketch book, but would be a comprehensive tracery of the French struggles from the earliest times to the consulate of Napoleon Bonaparte.

And why the French? The author should let Thomas E. Watson himself answer that question here, as he did in Volume I, Chapter XII of his most celebrated work:

“Not a single one of the liberties we enjoy was conceived in America. Each and every one of them was cradled in the Old World. These principles of civil liberty had all been sprung in Europe, and had for gen-

THE LESSON OF HISTORY

erations been forcing and fighting their way onward,—running the gauntlet of the centuries.”

And it was in France that most had been done for reform—there that the real death blow had been delivered to caste, class and tyranny. Was it not in France that revolt had become so positive, so irrevocable, so determined that the deluge it brought had submerged king, prelate and grandee? And could the same be said of any other nation?

And where had it all begun—to whom did the French owe most for the breaking of their three-fold chain? We should fail utterly to understand the motive, as well as the motif, of this man’s masterpiece did we not vision him on the hustings of the South and West with his reform preachments when we read:

“The coldly practical men scorn these enthusiasts. Yet the doctrinaire, the dreamer, eventually rules the world. Time has revenged these pioneers of modern civilization. They were slain because they came too early, and the men who slew them, having had time for reflection, adopted, one after another, the principles for which the pioneers had died.”

Then, too, there was the desire not to become embittered by his political defeats—defeats that meant much to him, for it was the political, not the literary, field that he had intended to engage his best efforts. Work in which he could become absorbed was the antidote and such work indeed was that upon which he now engaged.

Given over wholly to this task, Mr. Watson became enamored of it; and more, for the book became a veritable obsession. The world was shut out indeed. What was transpiring upon the political arena, in the courts, was

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

now naught to him. The affairs of citizens of Thomson, never of much interest to him, made no registry upon his mind. In his daily journey down town to the post office he was observed but observed nothing. Men spoke but he knew nothing of their presence.

In his library and in the dense woods beside his house and in its rear, untouched then as today by the hand of man, he breathed the spirit of another land in other eras. And well indeed did he enter into that spirit. He was as a man born to see, to feel, to know in all its intricacy the movement of a great people, and of its kings, its priests, its men of power.

So great was the hold the labor had taken upon him that he was wholly abstracted even in the presence of his family. He heard none of their conversation at meals. He saw them around him, knew that they knew his mind was withdrawn from their consideration, and they sought not to break through the mental barrier.

Mrs. Watson, ever sensitive to the mold of her husband's nature, appreciative of mood and idiosyncrasy, was the guard between him and the world in those days of abstraction. She saw that Durham and Agnes entered and left the house quietly, the library being adjacent to a portion of the front veranda. They were made to join in play with other children back of the house.

Mr. Watson used the quiet of night for the actual writing. He spent the days in research. Around him, on desk, in chairs, on the floor were piled the many volumes he had collected during the years and bought specially for his present task in America and Europe. The materials were of great variety. Unlike many historians he did not scorn to check, against the standard histories, the biogra-

THE LESSON OF HISTORY

phies and the memoirs; and it is easily seen that the originality of his history was attributable, so far as his sources were concerned, to these latter more than to the former.

When the evenings came he concentrated his faculties for writing. Rarely ever partaking of the evening meal, he drank heavily of the strongest coffee; and an hour or two after he had gone into the library Mrs. Watson brought in a pot of coffee—as strong as she could make.

The power to concentrate increased by frequent cups of the beverage, the historian gave to his labor, without grudge or stint, every atom of energy he possessed. He meant to write a book that men would not forget, and he knew no ephemeral book would be remembered. Tons of such, and about France, had been written and gone to oblivion. There were many others to be admeasured with his which had already received the acclaim of scholars. No work that did not reveal both the thorough mastery of the subject and an originality of treatment would live, he well knew.

Without fear of the verdict, with full confidence in his preparedness (having had studious recourse to two thousand volumes upon his subject), he now brought to bear his powers of synthesis and analysis, of construction and interpretation—the former in magnificent symmetry, the latter in infinite variety of illumination.

And full evidence we have, at the outset, of the Watson grasp, in utmost concentric, of the drama of France; for whether written before or after the body of the work, the following excerpt from his introduction reveals that the figures thereof shall be moved with ease back and forth, subject to his will:

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

She has sounded the depths of royal absolutism and of communistic anarchy; has made and unmade constitutions in the pathetic effort to get one that would fit; has known a military despotism, which bluntly told the women to marry and bear children in order that Napoleon might be continuously supplied with troops; has known an absolute monarchy, where a graceful manner was more effective at court than a head well filled with sense; and has known a government of the rabble, under which there was an insurrection against property, and death sentences passed against citizens for the sin of wearing aristocratic names and clean shirts.

No land has given birth to men more great, more good, more brave; none has been cursed with men more vile. No people have climbed higher in the arduous pathway of victory; none have been so pitilessly stricken down in defeat.

The present writer is not called upon to picture the passion for wronged humanity that swept this man's soul as he wrote *The Story of France*. The reading thereof reveals it more vividly than this account could do. Among those dramatic incidents involved which the reading would not reveal is that his labor, protracted until the break of day, many times left him too worn to walk from his desk, causing him to collapse upon a couch as he rose and turned from a manuscript wet with tears.

It is his due to recount somewhat of his success. The work in two volumes, of some 1700 pages, begun in 1897 and finished toward the close of the next year, and published in 1899 by The Macmillan Company (New York), was declared editorially by the *New York Evening Journal* (April 20, 1901) "the best history that has ever been written by an American." *The North American*

THE LESSON OF HISTORY

(Philadelphia) said of it: "Many histories of France have been written, many in the English tongue, but none that can compare with this." *Public Opinion* (New York) said: "High and low receive fair, even generous, treatment at Mr. Watson's hands. He sees the stains upon the revolution, but he cannot condemn it." In the *New Orleans Harlequin*, Professor J. H. Dillard of Tulane University wrote: "Whether or not Mr. Watson started out with such a boast, he has certainly succeeded in writing a history which is as interesting as a novel."

The American reviews were widespread, and appeared prominently displayed. The more conservative English critics did not fail to be just as profuse, in proportion. All quoted extensively, impressed with the author's vigorous and unusually dramatic style.

Said the *London Daily News* (July 16, 1902): "Mr. Watson has the true historical student's gift for selecting some incident wherein the whole spirit of an epoch incorporates itself. . . . Mr. Watson's summary of the sordid poverty of France, of the mad extravagance and selfishness, and blindness, of Louis XIV's Court at Versailles, of the general moral debacle of the ruling classes, is excellent." *The Liberty Review* (British) declared of the second volume: "Altogether a very brilliant, attractive book, which, if it does not advance anything very new for or against the Revolution, is replete with interesting details, including an extremely vivid and exciting account of the journey to Varennes."

The first volume had been widely read and commented upon before the second was ready for issue and caused much expectancy, no small part of which was elicited from Mr. Watson's old associates in Congress. That ex-

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

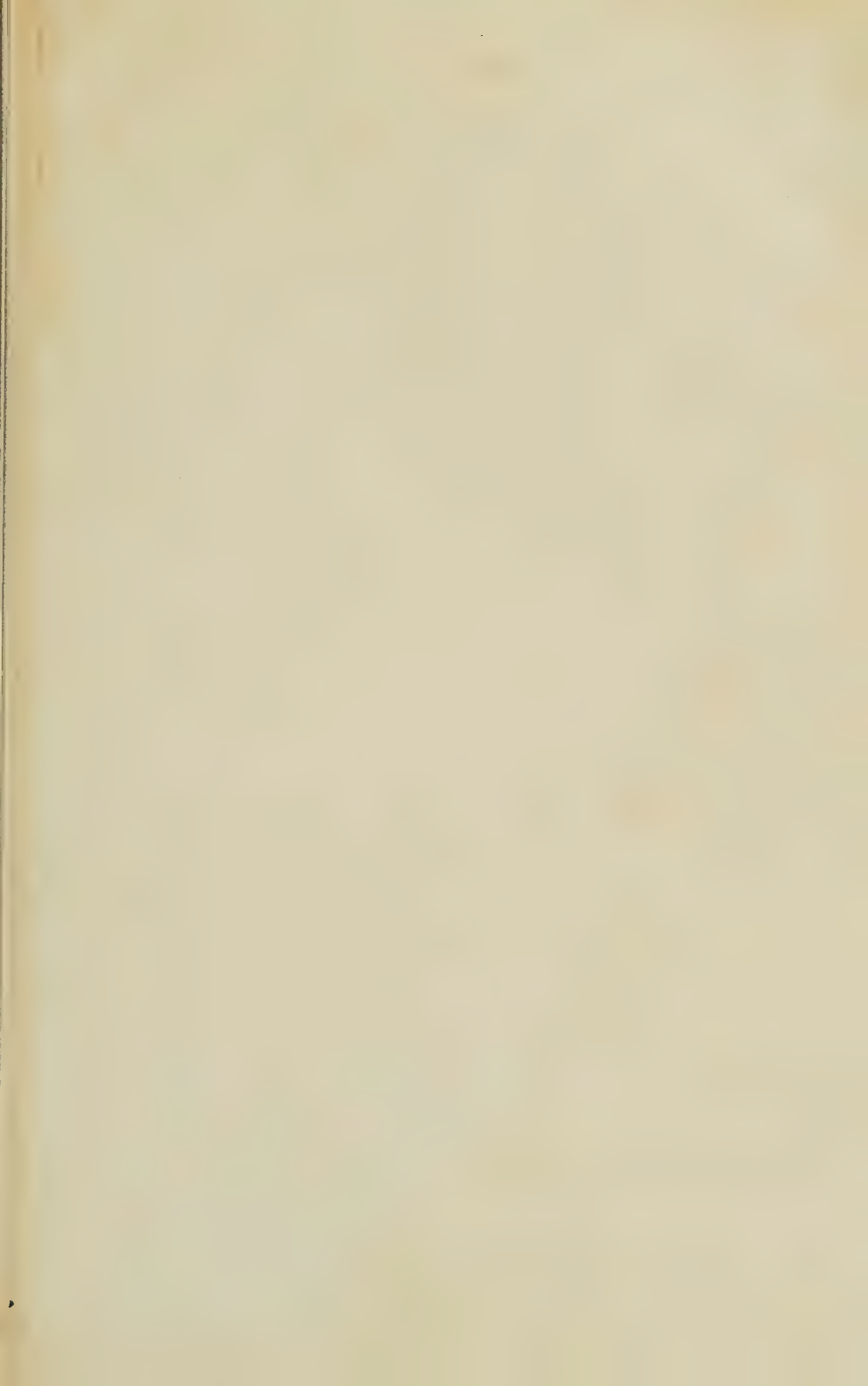
pectancy is presumed to have been fully met as the second volume gave a more lengthy treatment to the revolution than the first had given to the entire period from the earliest times to the end of the reign of Louis XV.

It was Mr. Watson's intention to write *A Popular History of the United States* before going further with any work involving the French; but his publishers persuaded him to go ahead at this time with his contemplated treatise on Napoleon Bonaparte. One reason for this was that the history of France entered upon the Napoleonic era without completing it. When he reached the end of the consulate of the Corsican, in the history, he closed that work, inasmuch as his biography would naturally complete the entire scheme.

The proposed United States history, and also a biography of Robert E. Lee projected several years later, were never written, but Mr. Watson's *Napoleon* was. Completed in 1901, and issued the next year by the same publishers, the one-volume biography achieved prestige and popularity equal to that of the French history.

The chief impression made by the *Napoleon* was reflected in the general surprise at the author's mastery of the tactical maneuvers of Bonaparte's battles. In this respect the work of a lawyer and politician reads like a treatise by a military expert.

Both works found their way into the university and public libraries of America and Europe.



It was only after I had
 revised all previous and
 reported decided to finally
 remove this of all
 it is a
 It will be a
 and the
 covered by every one

PAGE OF THE ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT OF THOMAS E. WATSON'S *HYPOLYTON*.

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

juror who wanted to look up the law of homicide, the law being, of course, that the jury must take the law directly from the judge. At the second trial, presided over by Judge Marcus Beck (later a Supreme Court Justice), Cooper was found guilty of involuntary manslaughter in the commission of a lawful act and sentenced to one year, a virtual victory for the defense.

Now, in the Adkins case in Fulton Superior Court, Solicitor-General Hill meant to put all his power into the prosecution. Associated with him was Luther Z. Rosser, afterwards to be regarded as the greatest corporation lawyer Georgia had produced. With Watson was a member of the Atlanta bar who is today considered the most successful lawyer in the State. It was as quite a young lawyer that Reuben R. Arnold joined with Thomas E. Watson in the Adkins case. Suffice it to say the last two won, and in a most bitter contest.

Urged by S. R. Bridges, the head of an Atlanta lyceum bureau, Mr. Watson now prepared a lecture on the South. As he had been advised, his reputation would insure large audiences and warrant a continuation of platform work for an indefinite period at large fees. It so turned out, the orator going into a large number of cities and towns; but the work was too exhausting, and Mr. Watson, not being dependent upon it, gave it up.

The estate of the late James Whitehead, prominent lawyer who had been associated with Mr. Watson at the outset of the McGregor trial, engaged him as general counsel to wind up its affairs. He was also employed in combating the will of Milton P. Reese, son of Judge W. M. Reese, by representatives of the testator's wife and daughter. Mr. Watson secured a compromise satis-

CHOICE OF THE PEOPLE'S PARTY

factory to all concerned. The case yielded him a fee of \$2500.

The year 1903 in the Watson life was mostly significant for the speech he made to the Georgia Legislature opposing child labor. The bill before the body to abolish child labor did not pass at that session but became a law at the next.

His literary program being by no means complete, Mr. Watson turned back to his library to write *The Life and Times of Thomas Jefferson*. He wanted "to show upon what principles a genuine government of the people, as contrasted from a government of the privileged few, must be founded." He held that "all the lovers of class rule go back to Hamilton; all the upholders of a government of the people, by and for the people, get their creed, so far as this Republic is concerned, from Jefferson."

The work went rapidly forward to completion; and was well received mainly because of its departure from the dry, stilted methods of treating the Sage of Monticello.

Close upon the heels of the *Jefferson* appeared Mr. Watson's only novel, *Bethany*, a story of the Civil War and its effect upon plantation life in the South. It was largely based upon fact, the author's recollections of Civil War heroes of the South, and its characters were taken from real life, as we have already had occasion to say.

The *Jefferson* and *Bethany* were issued by D. Appleton & Company (New York) in 1903 and 1904 respectively.

On July 4, 1904 the National Convention of the People's Party, at Springfield, Illinois, nominated Thomas E. Watson for President. (In 1900 they had nominated Wharton Barker.) Hon. Thomas H. Tibbles, of Nebraska, was nominated for Vice-President. On the

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

night of August 18, 1904, Watson made his famous Cooper Union speech in New York City, upon his formal notification.

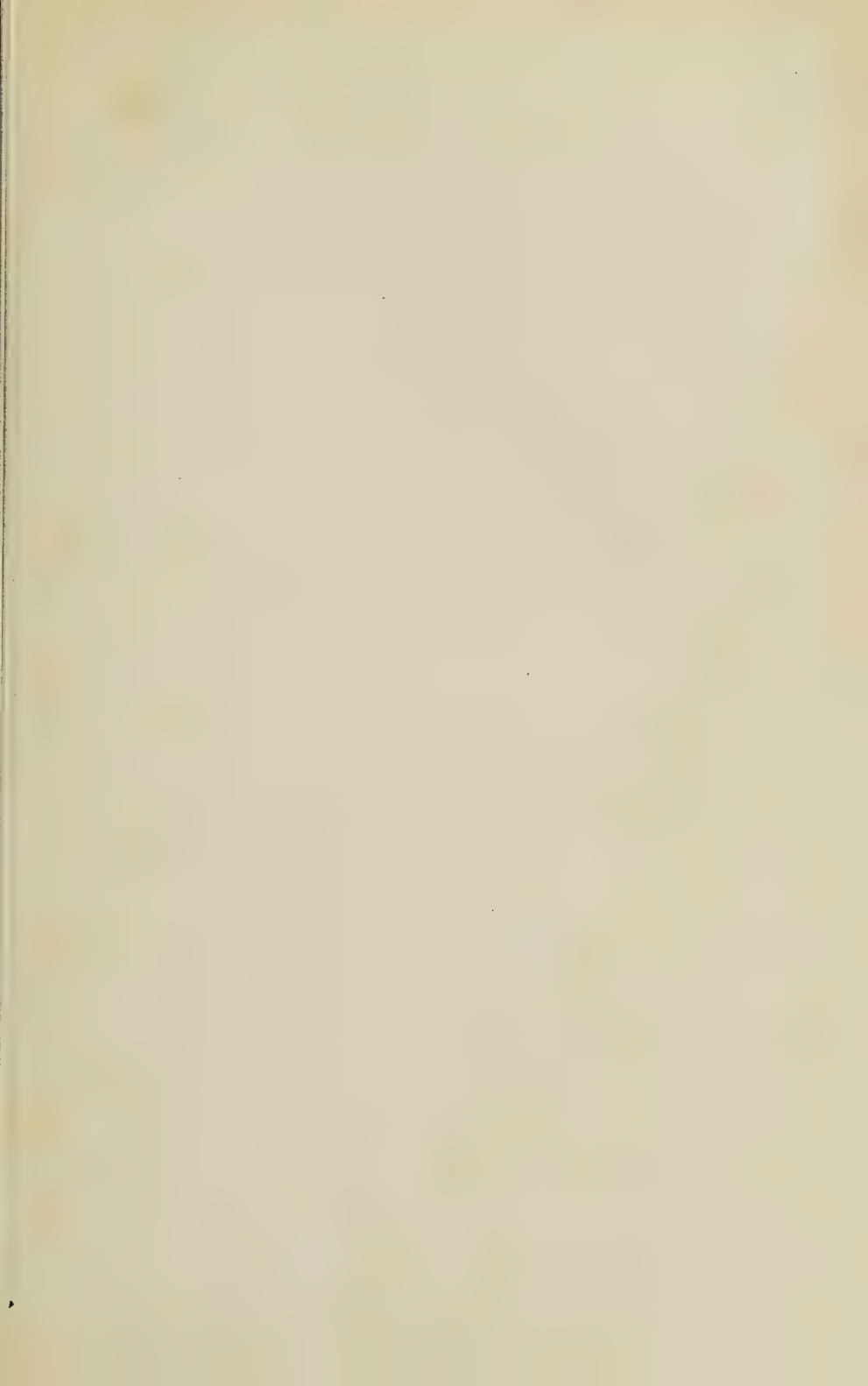
According to the *New York Evening Journal*, "There were hisses for Theodore Roosevelt and Alton B. Parker, a howl of derision for Grover Cleveland and David B. Hill, and a storm of howls and yells for August Belmont and Patrick McCarren." Roosevelt and Parker, of course, were respectively the Republican and Democratic standard bearers for the year. Watson was giving both the old parties a swift kick—whether it ever amounted to anything in the concrete or not.

"Tell me that the people of this country are resting easy under conditions like these?" he said. "Tell me that the confidence game being played upon them by the wily leaders of both the old political parties creates no angry discontent?"

"The man who comforts himself with that belief has no conception whatever of the true feelings of the American people. Do you need proof that the masses are ready to rush to the support of any leader who is brave enough to challenge the right of the corporations to rule this land?"

"See how they rallied to W. R. Hearst. Because he had taken sides with the masses, because he was denouncing oppression and pleading for the rights of the common man, there was from ocean to ocean an upheaval in his favor which astounded the professional politicians and strained all of the resources of political strategy to defeat that noble-hearted champion of the Jeffersonian democracy."

At the mention of Hearst the crowd rose to its feet and cheered. In June, before the Democratic nomination,



From the memorable day Patrick
Henry's speech in the Burgesses
when Jefferson the college student had
stood in the door of the lobby listening
he had been in the very front rank
of the fighters. He had written the
first resolutions which declared
for Independence; ~~and~~ at a time

When I looky
posing as subject of the thing.
His Summary View was the liter-
bravest paper in all the liter-
ature of that ~~to~~ early day;
and the a blast. It put
the neck in the halter in
the event rebellion did not
succeed.

CHOICE OF THE PEOPLE'S PARTY

Mr. Watson had wired the *New York American* and other papers a strong card advocating Hearst, who was candidate for the nomination, and citing where he was a far better man than Cleveland, because the latter was not removed from Wall Street even as much as Roosevelt. When Judge Parker got the nomination, the Eleventh District of New York renominated Hearst for Congress. To him, as to Watson, the big question now was, to quote Mr. Hearst's speech accepting the Congressional nomination: "Shall the trusts own the people through the control of natural monopolies and of legislation, or shall the people direct their own legislation and retain, as the Constitution and the founders of this Government intended they should retain, that American independence, equality and opportunity which have made the nation great and the individual citizen prosperous and happy?"

Mr. Watson's going into print in support of Hearst for President was the outcome of his independence along all lines. He had done so in March, not anticipating a call from the Populists to head their party at that time. But he did so again in June and would have done so after his own nomination had the opportunity presented itself; that is to say, there never was a time during the 1904 campaign when he did not want to see a progressive like Mr. Hearst heading either one of the old line parties—in fact both of them. He wanted a progressive elected President regardless of what ticket it was on. When none was nominated, he took the field again at the head of the People's Party. It is a matter of conjecture that he would have run on the Populist ticket had Mr. Hearst, or some other progressive, been nominated; and it is equally surmisable that in that case he would have favored a fusion.

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

However, Roosevelt's victory in November requires no explanation or analysis here. The Republican Party was strong enough to elect him and it did it. The satisfaction, if not elation, of Watson and Hearst over the defeat of Parker, regarded as one of the most confirmed reactionaries the Democratic Party has ever nominated, was real, outspoken and in fact celebrated in cartoons in New York newspapers. Watson had said in his speech in Chicago on October 10th (on which occasion he was introduced by Clarence Darrow) that Wall Street, the currency contractors who made it so hard for the common people to get hold of any money, didn't care whether Roosevelt or Parker was elected—that they knew they would get as good a deal out of one as the other, though he credited Roosevelt with "a manly frankness and resolve." He further charged Bryan with "holding out his wrists for the handcuffs" when the deal was made at the Democratic convention for the nomination of Parker, and:

"Had Bryan unfurled the flag of revolt and called the people to rally to the standard of true Democracy, every Jeffersonian in this republic, regardless of party affiliations, would have moved to him, as they did in the days of Jackson, and the cry would have been Bryan! Bryan! and he would have marched onward into the White House."

Mr. Watson pushed a vigorous speaking campaign in the North and South, rallying the hosts of lovers of real democracy, as he said, and eliciting an interest in the Populist side which it would not otherwise have received; for, as he said in his Chicago speech, the Populist convention "did not rise to the dignity of an item of news;

CHOICE OF THE PEOPLE'S PARTY

it was not even a joke." He addressed 600 union labor men at a banquet in his honor in New York City several days before he invaded Illinois. For his pains, he received throughout the nation 117,935 votes for President.

CHAPTER XXXV

THE CALL OF JOURNALISM

WILLIAM RANDOLPH HEARST occupies among publishers a very unusual position. It is that of caring less for money than for ideas. When he invaded New York City from California about the beginning of the twentieth century the American metropolis was to see not only a new era of time but also a new epoch of journalism. The young millionaire from the Golden West bought the insignificant *Journal* and then startled the managers of the established papers, as well as the public, by announcing at a banquet of the fourth estate that he would, from then on, control all the real newspaper talent in New York. They looked at him with considerable incredulity, and smirked at him with quite visible derision, until he told them that he meant to do it by paying twice as much money for talent as any other publisher was paying or would agree to pay; and their levity turned to apprehension. Hearst did what he said he was going to do—regardless of the tremendous outlay involved—and whipped the field because of his faith in new ideas as he triumphed over the prediction that “he’ll go broke; he won’t last two years.”

In the summer of 1904 Arthur Brisbane, the great Hearst editor, wrote Thomas E. Watson to come to New York. When he didn’t do it right away he wired him. Then Watson, with Major McGregor, put out for the

THE CALL OF JOURNALISM

great city and "in spite of all the Southern Railroad could do" finally landed in New York. Having construed a telegram as importing a grave necessity, the pair from McDuffie County looked around for Mr. Hearst's carriage or his automobile or his messenger, or for Mr. Brisbane. None of these were there.

"Well, just call a cab for the Hoffman House, Charley," said Watson, "maybe we can get in touch with them from there."

When they alighted at the famous hostelry McGregor asked of the cabman: "How much?"

"Three seventy-five," was the reply.

"Great guns! We're not trying to buy your old turn-out," blurted out McGregor.

The cabman looked neither way and said nothing. He had been through it all a thousand times and never failed to get his money.

"Step over to the clerk's window, Mac, and ask him if the fare is right," cautioned Watson.

When the Major put the question, the clerk said: "You'd better pay it at once. You're getting off light." And of course they paid.

When Watson came to settle the hotel bill several days later he "had reason to suspect that the cabman who had charged me \$3.75 for a five minutes' ride in a one-horse hack was related by blood and marriage to the Hoffman House management."

After repeated failures Watson finally got Brisbane on the telephone.

"Meet me at Delmonico's tomorrow at 12 o'clock for lunch," said the editor. It was, of course, agreed.

At a little past the appointed hour, Watson showed up,

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

having spent five or ten minutes trying to locate the door of the restaurant. Brisbane was waiting, reading a book. He led the way to a table, Watson feeling somewhat ill at ease but quite well possessed of his faculties of observation.

The conversation was broad and interesting—as conversation with Arthur Brisbane naturally would be. For, as Watson has said: “Few of the celebrities have kept out of the appropriation clause of the Brisbane mind; Huxley, Darwin, Spencer, Carlyle, Ruskin, and many another, each in his turn, has gone into the Brisbane hopper and been ground into editorials. Hidden away in books, the wisdom of those sages would have been lost to the average man. Brisbane rendered the world a service when he cast the heavy metal into his pot, melted it down, and issued it in small coin stamped with his individual and powerful impress.”

The Watson pen-picture of the editor, from his scrutiny at this time, would be hard to surpass for boiled down description.

“His forehead is curiously cut up with wrinkles. His brow seems to be laid off in three terraces, the first two of which recede slightly, while the third bulges boldly forward, giving his dome of thought a slight resemblance to one of those Dutch or Flemish houses where the third story hangs over to peep at the ground floor.”

Said Brisbane: “Mrs. Clarence Mackay told me a few days ago that her winter sojourn in the South was spoiled by seeing the little children who work in the South Carolina cotton mills going home from their work after dark with lanterns. You ought to write something about that.”

THE CALL OF JOURNALISM

Watson promised to do it. The conversation came closer home. Said the editor:

"I was at George Gould's not long ago. He's very fond of your *Story of France*. He reads it so intently that his wife said to me: 'Mr. Brisbane, I wish you'd take that red book away from George—he has it in his hands nearly all the time.'"

Watson replied that he was surprised that a book by a Populist should make a hit with a Wall Streeter.

The name of a well known newspaper man was mentioned, when the editor declared that the man had no real ability—for he had brown eyes. Grey eyes, he said, were the eyes of genius.

"There was Cæsar, born of a black-eyed race, but having grey eyes; Napoleon, born of a black-eyed race, had grey eyes."

Having been engaged more in looking around than talking, Watson glanced now at Brisbane; his eyes were grey. Brisbane was gazing steadily at Watson; his eyes were grey—and the eyes of the waiter were brown. Watson, though he had mentioned brown-eyed Daniel Webster and Robert Burns, gave up and admitted he was willing for Brisbane to have it his way.

But they couldn't stay there all day. Brisbane came right to the point.

"Suppose you take Mr. Hearst's morning *American* at \$10,000 a year. You could come down to the office once a day, look over a few exchanges, dictate an editorial, and then have the remainder of your time for your more serious literary labors. If within one year you can make a success out of the *American*, you can practically name

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

your own salary thereafter. Of course, if you don't make the *American* a success, Hearst will have no further use for you."

It was right to the point. But nothing could be done now. The Presidential campaign was in full progress, and Watson had to finish that.

And after he had finished it, or it had finished him, politically, for the time being at least, Watson fell in with the *Town Topics* and *Smart Set* promoter, Col. W. D. Mann. Asking Brisbane about Mann later the editor warned Watson against him as he was generally credited with being a common blackmailer.

Watson had never heard of Mann until one day when the "miserable old fraud," as Watson afterwards heard him called on all sides, came to Watson's room at his hotel, geniality and optimism breaking through his heavy shock of white whiskers and side-burns and shaking his "bay-window." The man looked like a combination of Santa Claus, John Bull and John Barleycorn. Mann proposed that he would finance a monthly magazine to be published in New York, bearing Watson's name and editorially controlled by him. Watson was to be paid an "honorarium" of \$500 a month and his expenses for all trips between New York and Georgia. After consulting several New York friends, Watson agreed to the arrangement, and in March 1905 *Tom Watson's Magazine* was launched from 121 West 42nd Street. The cover was in light red and under the title, printed in two lines, was a drawing of the Liberty Bell, in red ink.

The magazine was of large scope, Mr. Watson dealing editorially with the political situation as the featured,

THE CALL OF JOURNALISM

opening matter; with a generous amount of fiction and articles by leading authors following it. Among the latter, in the first issue, were: Edwin Markham, Will N. Harben, Maxim Gorky, Wallace Irwin, Ella Wheeler Wilcox, Robert Barr, and Theodore Dreiser. Soon afterwards appeared the names of Edgar Lee Masters, Inez Haynes Gillmore, Mary Roberts Rinehart, and others then famous or to become so.

Mr. Watson added to his own labors an "Educational Department" and book reviews. His department of "Editorials" usually ran to thirty pages. In June 1906 he began his serial "Life and Times of Andrew Jackson."

The personnel of the management, besides Mr. Watson heading the list as editor, included John Durham Watson, now 24 years old, as associate editor; Richard Duffy, managing editor; Arthur S. Hoffman, assistant editor; Ted Flaacke, advertising manager; and one C. Q. DeFrance, circulation manager. W. Gordon Nye was staff cartoonist.

DeFrance was secretary of the Populist National Committee and was put on the magazine simply to keep Mr. Watson advised as to what was going on, inasmuch as he announced that he would edit the periodical from his home in Thomson. He had tired of living in New York some months after the magazine began.

It appears that DeFrance advised more with Mann than with Watson, for as soon as the magazine had gotten its circulation with Watson's name the above pair cut the editor's salary off when there was owing him the sum of \$9,000, he claimed. Mr. Watson declared that Mann was proven a blackmailer in the summer of 1906, in the trial

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

of Norman Hapgood and the two Colliers in a matter in which they were wholly vindicated. The September 1906 issue was the last one Watson contributed to.

Then Mann and DeFrance put *Watson's Magazine*, as it was now called, through a sheriff's sale and bought it in. They tried to run it, but failed, selling out to the *Business Magazine* for \$2000 after issuance of two more numbers. DeFrance took the mailing list, really the property of Watson, as it was composed mostly of names of his political friends, and sold it. Being thoughtful enough to keep a copy, however, he took that to Kalamazoo, Michigan, and used it in circulating a phonograph.

But the intention to continue before the people had not been supplanted, and in October 1906 Mr. Watson began publishing in Augusta *The Jeffersonian* (weekly); and in January 1907 *Watson's Jeffersonian Magazine* (monthly) in Atlanta. He edited both from his home in Thomson.

The opening number of the new magazine was featured by an article in which Watson exposed "the thing that now lies before me, bearing on its cover the legend, Watson's Magazine, and published at 121 West 42nd Street, New York." He went into the whole history of the deal with Mann and "of the treason of DeFrance." He called on his friends to take warning of "the two New York hum-bugs" and to drop subscription to the New York periodical, and get behind the Atlanta magazine. DeFrance published that Watson had deceived him and that he was wholly innocent.

The young cartoonist, Nye, had joined the editor and with great enthusiasm pictured Mann and DeFrance as grave robbers, seeking the body of the publication, and its spirit in flight to Watson in Atlanta.

THE CALL OF JOURNALISM

In the first issue he also explained that the reason he did not accept the Hearst offer was because he "did not like to be swallowed up in Hearst; and besides to edit a daily newspaper in New York necessitated his presence there, whereas his interests and local attachments were too great to make this sacrifice."

The *Jackson* biography was begun anew and run to completion, later being published in book form by the author. A monograph, *Waterloo*, followed it, published by Neale (New York.) "Ann Boyd" by Will N. Harben began in the initial number of the magazine.

The new magazine, if we regard size and general contents, was a more imposing publication at the start than in succeeding years. *The People's Party Paper* had expired some six or seven years before.

The weekly, at Augusta, was close behind the political situation. Candidates, from its very start, felt its force and the effect of its editorials. Mr. Watson wrote nearly everything it contained. And by no means of least interest was what he had to say on the aftermath of the gubernatorial campaign of 1906, to which we now direct our attention.

CHAPTER XXXVI

A TEST OF PERSONAL POWER

HON. HOKE SMITH, late Secretary of the Interior in the Grover Cleveland cabinet, and now head of an Atlanta law firm, entertained an ambition to be Governor of Georgia. So did Clark Howell, editor of *The Atlanta Constitution*. So did Hon. Pope Brown, of Hawkinsville.

Hon. Thomas W. Hardwick, elected in 1902 a Congressman from the Tenth Georgia District by virtue of the support of Thomas E. Watson, was a close friend of Smith. He desired to see Smith Governor, and he knew that a successful race would have to be run on principles. In this the two were in thorough accord. Both were men of great ability in sensing a political situation and in the advocacy of measures purporting to meet it. Mr. Hardwick was then and has remained one of the most unswerving advocates of democratic government according to the Jefferson school, as well as one of the most fearless political foemen, this nation has ever known, as his 12 years in Congress and partial term in the United States Senate have fully borne out.

Mr. Smith, of magnificent presence, not of as deep convictions as Hardwick, boasts, and rightly so, a record of constructive public achievement in Georgia and in the national capital known on both sides of the Atlantic.

Mr. Howell, not the least in a family famous for a cen-

A TEST OF PERSONAL POWER

ture in Georgia's public affairs, possessed a political ability of the first water—an almost unequalled power of discerning the future. And the extraordinary delicacy with which his political actions and reactions were ever adjusted has been amply proven in the labor and difficulty undergone by his enemies before they unseated him as Democratic National Committeeman from Georgia.

On September 11, 1904, Mr. Watson had delivered a powerful speech in Atlanta advocating disfranchisement of the negro in Georgia—holding that it could be done along lines not in conflict with the Constitution of the United States. He outlined certain of the provisions a disfranchisement measure could legally contain; and he pointed to several States which had already enacted one. The reason he announced as actuating him was his desire to provide a way for white voters to disagree, when they so desired at times when other principles made them disagree, without fear of the domination of a negro balance of power. This fear, he said, had been the thorn in the flesh of Democracy. If men could just get rid of that, by a permanent law which removed it from politics, they could then vote their convictions, for whom they pleased, and with what party they pleased.

The speech made a lasting impression, probably more lasting upon the politicians than the people, though such a measure in Georgia, of course, could meet with no popular disfavor. The kind of lasting impression alluded to by the author is that one which fructifies in the fertile mind in whose background lies some special design.

In 1906 Mr. Watson, still leader of the Populist Party, induced Pope Brown to offer for Governor on the disfranchisement platform. Mr. Brown would run, of

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

course, on the Democratic ticket, but Mr. Watson would support him—in fact, stump the State for him. The People's Party had ceased offering candidates.

Mr. Smith, capable in maneuvers, realizing the strategy of the new platform and quite honestly in favor of it himself, laid siege to the more rural politician of Pulaski County, and induced him to retire in Smith's favor.

Whereupon Congressman Hardwick bombarded the Populist leader with letters from Washington, and from every other place where he chanced to be, for several months, urging him to throw his support to Smith, to campaign for Smith.

Mr. Watson, now generally entitled the Sage of McDuffie, had bought an estate adjoining his home on Lumpkin Street, upon which was a dwelling far back from the road and surrounded by many trees. He remodeled the house, issued orders that not a tree was to be cut down, planted many more, and transformed the place into that magnificent southern mansion today famous under the name he gave it—Hickory Hill.

Agnes had married O. S. Lee and Mr. Watson installed them in the Lumpkin Street home. Durham had married in Kingston, New York, and was now occupying the apartment his father had leased at 1425 Broadway, New York, remaining in the metropolis until the dissolution of the New York magazine deal. When he came South again he went to Mr. Watson's lovely new estate at Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

Forth to Hickory Hill Smith sent his son, Marion, a new addition to his law firm, to seek the Watson aid in his candidacy. The young man was well received, hospitably

A TEST OF PERSONAL POWER

entertained and accorded a fairly definite promise of a favorable kind.

Judge James K. Hines wrote strong letters urging Mr. Watson to support Smith. The Hardwick letters continued. Then followed letters from Mr. Smith himself. The gist of the combined urge was that Mr. Watson indorse Smith in the newspapers (the two *Jeffersonians* were not yet launched), campaign for him, and by all means let it be known that he was going to vote for him. It was urged upon him that if he did not absolutely swing over to the Democratic side himself, the Populists he should urge to vote for Smith would refrain from doing so. The point was to advertise that Watson himself was going to vote for Smith, though not a Populist, and wanted all his friends in both parties to do so.

Notwithstanding the fact that Mr. Smith's letters were frank in their every particular, altogether sincere in their appeal to Watson to come forward now, at the psychological time, and help win the fight to remove the negro from Georgia politics and eliminate the Howell crowd, accused of a policy that fostered negro political strength, Mr. Watson was never quite satisfied with them. He believed he read from them a state of mental reservation that meant he would never have any real influence with Hoke Smith.

There was the instance about the Atlanta speech. Mr. Smith wrote Mr. Watson after the latter had yielded to the urge, knowing that the former's advocacy of disfranchisement made his platform acceptable, that it was much desired that he speak in Atlanta, but no hall had been obtainable except a Marietta Street theatre, which

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

would seat too small a crowd for results big enough to offset the scheme the Howellites were preparing. The Howellites meant to propound some definite questions to Mr. Watson, the main one among which was whether he meant to vote for Smith himself or simply try to get all the Democrats to do it. They meant to charge inconsistency to Watson, if he did not say he would do so; and they meant to circulate the report among the Populists that he was a traitor to them, if he did. Mr. Smith did not want to get himself and his following in an embarrassing jam by having Mr. Watson come to Atlanta under the circumstances and be the cause of a tissue of reports published in *The Atlanta Constitution*, unless he could feel assured they would be offset by reason of a sufficient number of voters having heard Watson's speech. This was the general tone of his letter, howbeit Mr. Smith himself had largely owned and now certainly controlled a newspaper in Atlanta, *The Journal*.

Mr. Watson never did like anybody to come at him half and half. The author is not diverging one whit from the theme by saying that Mr. Watson approached his political dickers with the same mental view point that characterized his private business: he wouldn't have a man on his farm whom he caught dividing his time with something else or somebody else.

He sensed a frame of mind in Mr. Smith which sought aid but was trying to dodge ever having to pay for it; that is to say, he was impressed with an attitude which was anxiously bidding for his support and was at the same time trying to avoid ever having to show a generous gratitude if he got it.

As time was to reveal, little did Mr. Smith understand

A TEST OF PERSONAL POWER

the Watson make-up. He said in his letter that if Mr. Watson really wanted to come to Atlanta to speak he would not stand in the way, but believed it would not be best, under the circumstances.

Well, what would he do? Smith had never done anything to him; there was no feeling between them; they were friends, though not particularly close friends. Moreover there was the essential thing—the disfranchisement platform. Who else was carrying that banner? Nobody. Would he permit an embryonic aversion—be it ever so inevitable an antipathy—to come between him and his first opportunity to fight in the concrete for a principle which was one of his most cherished and which he had advocated abstractly for years? Of course he would not.

So the support was accorded—and much it meant, for it elected Smith Governor. All over the State Watson went, yielding up the strength that was in him. The extent to which he gave himself is too well recorded in newspaper columns and cartoons to require a review here.

But the giving of his time and energy was not all. The campaign became a link in a chain of circumstances which nearly cost Watson his life.

When President Theodore Roosevelt learned that he, by inadvertence, had appointed John M. Barnes postmaster at Thomson over the objection of Mr. Watson, he wrote Mr. Watson declaring he would never have done so, had the objection reached him.

Barnes, a man of violence and generally feared, made the statement that he understood Watson sold out to the Republicans in 1896. Of course the utter senselessness of the charge is apparent from our survey of what happened at the Populist convention of that year, regardless of

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

whether Watson was base enough to have sold out. Mr. Watson wrote Barnes a letter confronting him with his statement. Barnes replied that he was simply repeating what he had heard, stating further that Watson had told him on the train that he, Watson, was going to control federal jobs in the South. Watson wrote Barnes demanding that he refrain from making any such false reports. He then enlisted the aid of Senator A. S. Clay, of Georgia, and Hardwick to have President Roosevelt and the Postmaster-General remove Barnes. The fact that he had refused to aid Barnes, a Republican, in securing appointment, alone was enough to prove, of course, that Watson did not have any deal on by which he could control patronage. President Roosevelt did not remove Barnes, but he wrote Mr. Watson that had he known the man was making any such charges as those referred to he would never have appointed him.

✓ In the heat of the 1906 campaign Barnes went to Macon and conferred with C. R. Pendleton, editor of *The Telegraph*. Based largely on what Barnes told him, Pendleton, a Howell man, brought out his sensational charges about Watson's having been bought by the Republicans, to break up the solid South. Of course Watson answered him; and from then on the bitterest newspaper controversy continued between them. Mr. Pendleton, unlike many men who attacked Watson, was a man of first-class ability and when he engaged in controversy with a man it meant something. Of course, he never proved any sell-out; nor did any man after him succeed in doing it, though quite a few essayed to do so.

Watson denounced Barnes as a character of the lowest kind. Barnes sent him formal word that the next

A TEST OF PERSONAL POWER

time he came to the post-office for his mail or for any other purpose, he would kill him. Watson thought it over for a while; and after arming himself, started for the post-office. The people of Thomson regarded Barnes as a highly dangerous man. He was reputed to have already killed several men; and no one doubted he was reckless enough to shoot any man.

As Watson neared the post-office, Forrest, his brother, ran across the street and grabbed him by the arm!

"Tom, for God's sake don't go in there! You know as well as I do that that man will kill you the minute you walk in that door."

Watson declared he was not afraid of Barnes, and would be a coward if he let any man tell him he couldn't go to the post-office for his mail. He would have gone on, but Forrest became so insistent and begged him so hard, arguing that it would mean the killing of Watson by Barnes and the killing of Barnes by Forrest, all to no reasonable purpose whatsoever, that Watson yielded, turned and went back home.

Barnes later killed a man, and on his trial he requested Mr. Watson to join his counsel. Though the enmity between them had abated, Mr. Watson agreed only to appear in the trial, without active participation. Barnes was convicted and sent to the penitentiary for life. He secured a permit to go to a hospital where he killed himself.

It was a great Smith victory—and a great victory for Watson, for he won the approval and esteem of many Democrats not before with him. And naturally so. Had he not gone out of his own party and given his support to a Democrat? And had he not literally worked

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

himself down for him? It was true enough. Judge Hines wrote Watson that he deserved the credit for Smith's victory, though he failed to carry McDuffie County for Smith. Judge Hines declared that Smith clearly owed his election to Watson—that Watson was now shown to be the most powerful man in the State, and that if Watson would come back into the Democratic Party he could go to the United States Senate.

CHAPTER XXXVII

CHECK UPON THE GOVERNOR'S CHAIR

A NEW victory—a victory in the ranks of organized Democracy—had been Watson's. The telling triumph of Smith reacted to the advantage of Watson, as Judge Hines had predicted it would, and he now occupied a strategic position before the entire political composition of the State.

Governor Smith, as soon as he relieved Joseph M. Terrell of the executive chair, began plans for carrying out his campaign promises. He put through a law adding to the regulatory power of the Railroad Commission; and he organized his forces for writing into the law of the State the negro disfranchisement pledge. Of course, no law could be passed which recited that its purpose was to disfranchise anybody. The Constitution of the United States would have voided any law in that form. So would the Constitution of Georgia; the difference being, however, that the State could change its Constitution, whereas it could not change the national organic law. The latter was paramount; hence a law not inimicable to it must be framed. The result was the act to amend the Constitution of Georgia, known as the registration law, approved by the Governor on August 21, 1907, which became effective upon ratification by the people. It provided that before a person should be qualified as an elector, he must register; and before he should be qualified to register or

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

vote he must meet certain requirements, among which were the ability to read and write a paragraph of the Constitution, or the ownership of a certain amount of property, or the record of having served in one of the wars of the United States, or that between the States, or proof of being descended from an ancestor who had done so. The requirements were special and in addition to other general requirements. The result, naturally, would be to eliminate, to a large extent, the negro from elections of State officials. And it has so resulted.

Another triumph of the very signal Smith administration was the prohibition law passed by the 1907 Legislature. It put Georgia in the forefront among the States in the outlawing of the manufacture or sale of intoxicants.

For these achievements Mr. Watson bestowed high praise upon Governor Smith. In his *Jeffersonian Magazine* he declared that here was a man who carried out his promises to his people—a man of statesmanship. He was fully warranted in his assertion, for Smith had indeed carried out his pledges, and that with a uniformity, a completeness, unmatched by any other Governor Georgia ever had. Mr. Watson predicted in his September issue that Governor Smith would go to the United States Senate.

Though he had withdrawn from the active practice of law, Mr. Watson was importuned by the wife of one Glover, who had been a guard at the Watson home when threats were made against his life, to represent her husband, charged with the murder of a woman cotton mill worker. A fee of \$1000 was offered. He told her Glover could not be acquitted, but that he would do what he could to secure a commutation after the conviction, for which he would accept a fee of \$500. Of this sum \$250 was paid.

THE GOVERNOR'S CHAIR

Glover was convicted and sentenced to hang. Mr. Watson represented him before the Prison Commission, his ground being that the man was of unsound mind. The Commission refused to recommend clemency, the actual determination of which was with the executive. A petition was accordingly filed with the Governor, seeking a commutation of the death sentence to life imprisonment on the insanity ground. It was argued before him and he refused to commute. Mr. Watson returned the \$250. Glover was hanged.

Governor Smith was adamant, though pressure was brought to bear, at the instance of Mr. Watson, by a number of prominent Atlanta lawyers. The Governor declared that no just cause had been to him shown why there should be any change from the sentence of the court.

There ensued a break between Watson and Smith. Mr. Watson wrote to Judge Hines that Smith ought to be put out of office. He did not state that his reason was the Glover case, but he urged upon Judge Hines that Smith did not intend to do anything Watson wanted him to do, that he had never so intended, and that Watson had feared all along that he would not. He said he had supported Smith in 1906 solely because there was no other candidate representing the principles Watson wanted to see in force following the come-down of Pope Brown, and by no means because of any personal regard for Smith. Judge Hines replied that Governor Smith had fully acquitted himself of his political obligations and he would not desert him.

Entanglements and unpopular moves by the Governor now followed. He removed Hon. S. Guyton McLendon from the Railroad Commission when Mr. McLendon de-

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

clared Smith was no real friend to Savannah port rates. He further removed Hon. Joseph M. Brown from the same body—and had sufficient cause to rue the step.

The cry was taken up that “the colossus” had sought to humiliate “Little Joe” Brown (a son of the former Governor Joseph E. Brown), and a delegation of Smith enemies waited upon Brown with an urgent request that he enter the lists against Smith in the 1908 election. It was so ordered, or about to be ordered.

Forth then to Hickory Hill repaired a delegation of politicians with faces strange and new. The Sage was in a highly propitiatory frame of mind. Yes, yes, Brown should run—of course he should run.

But would Watson help—would he say so ere Brown essayed the race?

He would.

Then it was so ordered.

Then followed the most heated political contest since the '90's. Watson threw his support in the weekly *Jeffersonian* to Brown, and that gentleman of unusually small physical proportions greatly surprised the man of more magnificent presence and of excellent record by defeating him most decisively.

There were many to give praise as well as the credit to Mr. Watson for accomplishing the change. It is not hard to conclude that he was entitled to the latter.

In declaring that Watson was entitled to the credit, the author is to be understood as stating a thing far more remarkable than appears from what has gone before. It is not often that we find a man who is bold enough, self-confident enough, or powerful enough to be the deciding

THE GOVERNOR'S CHAIR

factor in another man's race the while he is running one of his own.

While preaching the doctrine of a Smith ouster, Mr. Watson was conducting a little private campaigning of his own. Not so important, to be sure—he was just running for President of the United States of America.

Yes, it was even so. The Populists "had gone and done it again," had nominated Watson as its 1908 standard bearer—and had nominated for the last time. As is quite supererogatory to state, the People's Party wound up in 1908. Yet Watson got votes enough to show there were still some Pops alive. There are some yet, for that matter, but whether enough to hold a meeting this author is unable to state—though he is quite able to state that he doubts it.

But the author is fully within the purview of this narrative to mention Watson's race for President in 1908, for it was now that he saw the versatile leader for the first time. In Ware County courthouse at Waycross, Ga., he heard the most notable political deliverance he had ever heard—notable mainly for the fact that from the time the speaker took the floor until he sat down there was one continuous chorus of laughter. Such wit he may never hear again. Realizing there was no hope of his being elected, even of carrying his own State, Mr. Watson was under no strain of passion, no feeling of quarterless fight. He aligned Bryan and Taft together; both represented the same thing; "if one was a buzzard, the other was a turkey buzzard," he said.

"But as for Taft," he declared, with his characteristic rising inflection of the voice as he raised his arms above his

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

head, "if I were a thunder-cloud, I would hover above his form until I had hurled every bolt I possessed into his quivering body." He charged the Republican nominee with being in league with the moneyed powers "who kept the farmer in bondage," and he believed that Providence would be justified in resorting to means of its own for his deliverance.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

GOING THE LIMIT

ALICE LOUISE LYTLE was a woman of unusual influence. Possessing a most agreeable personality, she combined charm, intellect, an efficiency broad in its scope, and a boundless capacity for work. In charge of *The Brunswick Journal*, she had made it pay where it had never paid before. Unhappiness in her home resulted in a separation from her husband. She secured work with the two *Jeffersonians* in Atlanta. The weekly sometime before had been moved from Augusta and both Watson organs now had headquarters in the Temple Court Building in the capital city.

Mrs. Lytle at first proved herself a valuable aid in a number of respects, though she later became far more a liability than an asset. Besides her untiring work she was quick to sense any infraction of loyalty to Mr. Watson in the early years of her association. She uncovered to him certain financial irregularities in the office, and Mr. Watson, who, as we have seen, edited his publications from his home, wrote her to come to Thomson for an interview. The result was the removal of the *Jeffs* to Thomson in 1910.

To take care of the printing side of a publishing enterprise which hitherto had been by contract, Mr. Watson built a modern plant in a field adjoining Hickory Hill at a cost of \$100,000. It was equipped with ample machin-

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

ery, each major unit of which had its own electric motor, the current for which was generated by a large dynamo driven by a still larger gas engine. Besides the magazine, books were printed and bound with stiff paper backs, and the weekly went off the press at the rate of 20,000 copies an hour.

The Jeffersonian Publishing Company, with Mr. Watson as president, was launched with a speech by him at the plant to a huge crowd assembled pursuant to his announcement, and stock in large quantities was subscribed. J. J. Brown, later elected to head the Georgia Department of Agriculture through Mr. Watson's support, was made vice-president.

With Mr. Watson still styled editor and publisher, Mrs. Lytle was made managing editor of both publications.

In 1902 Mr. Watson had issued an order for the people of McDuffie County to elect Durham to the Legislature. Of course, the order was not made out upon any formal blank printed for the purpose, but it was an order nevertheless and was complied with. Mr. Watson did not have cause to congratulate himself, however, even upon the selection of his own son, for the young man was so consistently drunk at the capitol that his father ordered him back home, Durham resigning in the middle of his term. He was now performing certain routine duties at the publishing plant. The youth was good-hearted, made many friends and was loved by his mother with the most tender devotion.

Of a genial, convivial and complacent disposition, Durham found it hard to shun evil companions; and his return home drunk one day caused his father to lay down

GOING THE LIMIT

his pencil and paper and take a stroll down town. He strolled, and as he strolled his anger waxed warmer. By the time he reached the business end of Main Street the volcano of his wrath erupted. He stopped at a barber shop, went inside and cursed out every man therein. And we are to understand that when Watson cursed there was no picking of words—he poured forth all the profanity he could remember or invent, and he had few equals at either. But he did not stop here. Systematically he “took up one side of the street and down the other,” entering all stores and stopping all passers by, denouncing in stentorian tones every person with whom Durham had been “hanging out,” and laying down the law that the next time he came home drunk somebody down town was going to hear from it in a way besides words. Though with keen vividness the incident is today recalled, no one seems to remember that any man offered Mr. Watson a reply.

Now, at the time of the removal to Thomson of the publishing business, Durham and his wife were occupying a house his father built between Hickory Hill and the plant. They had a little girl, Georgia Doremus Watson.

Agnes and Mr. Lee, who was also connected with the publishing company, were occupying the old home place where Mr. Watson's books were written, and they too had a little girl about the same age as the other grandchild, Georgia Watson Lee.

As the year wore on sharp political lines were drawn for another battle royal between Hoke Smith and Joe Brown. Though it was well realized that the Sage would not support Smith, a delegation of his backers again ascended the heights of Hickory Hill to beg him to just say nothing. To this he readily assented, for he had already announced

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

his intention of confining himself that year to "the Democratic deserters in Congress who went over to the Republicans in March 1910 on the Joe Cannon rules." Hardwick, though not one of the "deserters," had sided with Smith in the gubernatorial fight.

Whereupon Mr. Watson belabored Hardwick with a sound editorial thrashing, which ran away with itself. He announced a big rally for August 6th at the courthouse in Thomson. He would speak. He "would show Hardwick up."

Hardwick, pointing out in newspaper interviews that Watson had formerly spoken in such high terms of him, announced he would go right to Thomson and hold a public meeting himself. He said he would do it on Watson's front steps before he would let anybody have cause to believe the Watson charges. He held a rally in a grove where he had a brass band.

Both Augusta papers were on hand and the next day, Sunday, carried several pages that obviously included everything that happened or was said. Hardwick pitched his speech on counter charges. He said that a man who would fall out with the Governor of the State because he wouldn't commute the sentence of a murderer was unworthy of belief or respect. Watson declared that Hardwick had descended to the position of a ring tool, and also attacked his private character.

"He let a low-brow sport at Macon slap his face about a gambling debt, and he got drunk, set the bedclothes of his room in the Lanier Hotel on fire trying to smoke, and ran out in his shirt-tail," he declared, provoking laughter.

He said that he was Hardwick's "political daddy" and

GOING THE LIMIT

that he ought to be spanked for treating in such a manner the man who made him.

Mr. Watson denied that he broke with Smith because of the Glover case. He said it was all because of the stand Smith took on the late primary.

"I believe in fair play for the city voter and the country voter," he said. "Therefore I worked for and helped you get the late primary which comes along toward the last of August. It doesn't hurt the city voter, but it helps the country voter because it gives him more time to hear the issues thrashed out, as he needs. Hardwick wanted to take it away from you. He had persuaded Smith to the same view. He tried to persuade me to it too, but he couldn't do it. But because I stood out against the early primary and in favor of the late one, he began to abuse me like a dog."

Hardwick had said he "was going to bury Tom Watson on August 23rd." Watson referred to the statement.

"Well, if he does, you'll be the livest corpse ever buried," yelled a man in the crowd. Watson charged that Hardwick had committed the burglarious theft from the office of the Ordinary of Washington County of the tax fi. fas. against Democrats so there would be no evidence against their capacity to vote, and had "thus lost the offices to the Populists of the county." He said if he denied it he would have him arrested. Turning to something else he said:

"I am going to play a royal straight flush today. Everybody here knows that my word is as good as my bond and my bond is as good as gold. I propose to forfeit \$10,000, payable in yearly installments of \$1000 and to

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

be divided among the Confederate veterans of the Tenth District who petitioned Hardwick to get that \$600,000 cotton tax repealed, if he can show he did anything."

It was a memorable day in politics of a purely personal kind, but accomplished nothing. Watson hired a hall in Atlanta (the huge auditorium), paying \$75 for its use, and tried to speak. His beginning was: "The world is plunging hellward" (which was denied in a reassuring editorial by Clark Howell), pivoting the burden of his speech upon the fall of Sodom and Gomorrah, but the gang of Smith and Hardwick hoodlums howled him down. He went back to Atlanta and hired the Orpheum Theatre, declaring he was going to make that speech if it was the last thing he ever did. There were early disturbances, but he spoke.

He gained nothing by it, for in the ensuing election both Hardwick and Smith were again elected.

Not deterred by this assertion of the people's choice, Mr. Watson continued his attacks on Smith, publishing in *The Jeffersonian* charges of a sensational sort made against Smith by a woman in 1882 and which appeared in *The Denver Tribune* at the time. The utterly disreputable character of the woman and the regret of the managing editor of the *Tribune* that his paper had been victimized by the story, written by a reporter whom he had forthwith discharged, were brought out with display by Fred L. Seely, editor and publisher of *The Atlanta Georgian and News*, in his paper; and the Watson editorial was wholly discredited.

CHAPTER XXXIX

RÔLE OF REFORMER

IN the August 1910 number of *Watson's Jeffersonian Magazine* the leading editorial appeared under the following caption:

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC HIERARCHY:
THE DEADLIEST MENACE TO OUR LIBERTIES AND OUR CIVILIZATION.

The author of this biography assumes that he is not called upon to make any *apologia* for dealing with any episode in the life of its subject, and he offers none. Men and women of judicial mind, recognizing that a biography is a record of fact, require none; others will demand one in vain. The author is presenting a document of facts, inescapable in detailing an adequate history; he is not entering upon the advocacy or opposition of any religious doctrine or church.

Preceding the text of this editorial appeared the following statement:

For the individual Roman Catholic who finds happiness in his faith, I have no word of unkindness. Some of my best friends are devout believers in their "Holy Father." If anything contained in the series of chapters dealing with the hierarchy causes them pain, and alienates their good will, I will deplore it.

The Roman Catholic ORGANIZATION is the object of my profoundest detestation—NOT the belief of THE INDIVIDUAL.

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

Thus was launched one of the most important episodes in the career of Thomas E. Watson. Launched now, it is well said: but not conceived now, not prepared for now. The positing of the Watson mind in enmity to the Romish Church had been accomplished long before. In his researches, in his mental ruminations, the die had been cast—and irrevocably so. He had been waiting until he should come to it in the proper order of his plans ere he should strike his blow. While his histories had traced “the abject destitution of a priest-ridden people” as the oppressions of kings and lords were traced, and though he had declared the unforgivable sin of Napoleon was his Concordat with the Pope, making for union of Church and State, done by the Emperor purely for political purposes and in derogation of his own conscience, Mr. Watson had premeditated a distinct work on the Roman Church.

And now he was entered upon it. In full cognizance of the nature of the step and the fierce reaction that would ensue, he adverted to Fontenelle, the French philosopher, who declared: “If I held a handful of truth, I would open only my little finger.” For to proclaim truth at variance with established creed, to assail institutions, methods and beliefs, was to court persecution, he said.

There are many persons who still ask why Mr. Watson attacked the Catholic Church. What could he hope to gain? Why should he wish to abuse a creed and the adherents thereof when he was in no wise connected with the former and had never been attacked or molested by the latter? What possible reason could he have for instituting a fight on the Catholics?

There were probably as many Protestants as Catholics

RÔLE OF REFORMER

who propounded these questions. They had a right to inquire, but were never justified in charging that he did not give answer in full. The world is crowded with men and women whose psychology is such that they are utterly incapable of understanding an attack which has not a personal provocation. They make up that vast army of beings whom nature made to pursue a common path. They are sincere when they say: we cannot, we cannot understand why this man should not do the things that we do and which our forefathers did.

So they had the right which nature had ordained to inquire what actuated this man. They would not have been in their normal course had they not done so. Yet, as the author declares above, they were never justified in their position that Watson did not answer in full of all demands. That they did not know his answer—what was the actual, particular, concrete thing that actuated Watson—and fell into the error of charging that his fight on Romanism was for money, when there was no one to pay any and when the extent of the financial loss was to be in the huge sum hereafter to be stated, came about through their listening to talk without reading the attack itself. Therefore the present writer recognizes the necessity of recounting the particular Watsonian reason. Here it is in the very first editorial:

“Emerson predicted that a Thinker would arise among us, some day, and that when he did, there would be a convulsion and readjustment. There are those who rate Emerson himself as a Thinker, but the revolution has not materialized. Perhaps he was too much of a generalizer, without the nerve or the faculty to lay his dynamite under-

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

neath anything in particular. He was of the Erasmus type, willing to lay eggs, but not to raise chickens: willing to dream and write, but not to march and fight."

There can be no mistake here as to just what he meant. It was well enough for philosophers to voice abstract longings for change, beg in general of the perpetrators of abuses that they desist, and thus stay on the safe side of the dead line; but his purpose was to cross the dead line and put dynamite under the particular thing he contended was the cause of the abuse, calling it by name, and calling out to the world: here is your enemy—this certain, distinct, particular and separate thing; why don't you go ahead and attack it?

Let it be again said that this biography is not expressing any opinion whatsoever upon the righteousness or discretion, or lack of either, of Thomas E. Watson's attack upon Roman Catholicism. In this day when preachers of tolerance are themselves the most intolerant preachers, it is necessary to keep this reminder before them—though the author quite readily concedes that it should not be necessary.

The Watson purpose was to do a work other American thinkers and reformers had not done—attack what he called the arch-enemy to its face, before the whole world, upon the open forum of public opinion, where everybody could see him, could know who it was doing it. Right or wrong, he was the first American scholar of importance to do so; and right or wrong, it is the thing which shall cling to his name longest.

Not the fight against legalized liquor, not the fight for federal loans to farmers, not the American Rural Free Delivery, not the fight upon the practice of voting office

RÔLE OF REFORMER

to the politician with no platform of principles, not *The Story of France*, the *Napoleon*, the *Jefferson*, shall be the signal Watson work in the years that are to come; but that work will be his open, definite, unequivocal, scholastic fight upon Roman Catholicism.

Why does the author say so? Will not the other labors be remembered? The author hopes that they will; he believes that they will, for many years, at least. But we are to understand that these things are like unto the accomplishments of many another man, are comparable to other, similar achievements. Watson did not fight for federal loans alone, nor alone for any of the other political reforms enumerated. Even the R.F.D. was sought to be accomplished by other men, who failed. Nor can the altogether valuable, original and entrancing histories of Watson, named above, be accredited as the most enduring factor in his fame; for a number of other men have written creditable lives of Jefferson, many another has written a worthy history of France, and there is no telling how many others have written acceptable lives of Napoleon Bonaparte.

No; it is not the excellence with which a thing is done that promotes and prolongs reputation—fame; it is the unquity of it. It is not the excellent thing that is done by a man in common with other men that is remembered longest; it is the thing he did that nobody else did. Or, by parity of reasoning, it is the thing he did which fewest other men ever did that attaches longest to his name. Why this should be true is not germane to our study here. It sufficeth that nature has so ordained it and that man cannot change it. There have been a number of men who performed in Europe a work with regard to

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

Catholicism of the nature of that performed by Mr. Watson, but they were few. History gives us just a few who performed a systematic attack, though many who essayed a spasmodic one. There is none other in America who has done so. In the western hemisphere Mr. Watson holds the field alone. There have been countless barkings and snappings at the Roman Church, of course—entirely too many to even attempt to recount; but there has been just one real scholar—conceded by the whole world to be a scholar before his attack was begun, though not by the Catholics afterwards—who fought Romanism along systematic lines, equipped with proficient learning, Thomas E. Watson.

It is indeed this phase of his career that distinguishes him most. Nothing else caused him to be so much observed, nothing else caused his name to become anathema to the members of the order he fought throughout the land, nothing else caused so many threats to take his life, coming, as they did, from every section of the country. If these things be true—and his mail proved them to be so—then this episode is the last one of Thomas E. Watson that will be forgotten.

But the point may be quite logically made here that nothing said above discloses any personal, private reason Watson could have had for his fight upon Catholicism. It assuredly does not, for he had none. The reason for the method of his fight, the means he employed, the line of his attack is by it fully disclosed—he desired to so conduct the fight that he would obtain definite and immediate results, reaction. The reason for his enmity to Romanism was his conviction that it was a menace to American liberty and civilization. Whether he should

RÔLE OF REFORMER

have entertained any such conviction is beside the mark. The fact that concerns us here is that he entertained it. The author is not responsible for the fact that he entertained it; he merely records that he did.

Yet we are not permitted to fall into any obscurity as to just what was that exact conviction. He epitomized it in this first gun that he fired. Regardless of any view of its soundness or sophistry, the author reproduces this epitome as the most strikingly dramatic paragraph ever penned by Thomas E. Watson in all his career:

In science and art, in literature and journalism, the human mind has scouted antiquated forms and dogmas, boldly dashing onward to higher and better standards. Yet in this age of colored photography, of the talking machine, of the electric light, of the motor-car, of the airship, of the printing-press, of the moving picture, *Superstition is still seated upon her ancient throne, with the cowl of the priest on her head, the silly gibberish of the Dark Ages on her tongue, and the implacable ferocity of the Inquisition in her soul.*

Here was the crux of his belief regarding the Roman Catholic organization and dogma; and each of the twenty-five chapters on the hierarchy which followed the first were pivoted upon it.

The work then appeared from his press in book form. It added to the hostility the serial had aroused. Literally hundreds of letters threatening his life poured in, inso-much that Mrs. Lytle had to sort them out from the other mail to prevent Mr. Watson from seeing them. Mysterious persons appeared at the Watson home, and, upon being denied admittance, threw scurrilous denunciations of Watson upon the floor as they departed. Mr. Watson

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

called in friends to aid in an armed search of the woods of his estate. Some of them regarded his fears as wholly unfounded, and were amused at them. Thomson police, however, verified that suspicious persons had been sent away from the place. The report reached Watson that a Catholic conference in New Orleans had proclaimed him the most serious foe to the Romish Church. He published a statement that he construed the reported action as against his life.

Of course, the charge of intolerance was made against him by Catholic and Protestant press. It was also made by great numbers of the individual believers of both persuasions; though there were many of the latter and a few who had once belonged to the former who said he was right. The contention was made, further, that Watson should be stopped, and his publications thrown out of the mails. To the charge of "intolerance in this modern age when a question pertaining to religion ought not to be discussed," he had a decisive, an altogether satisfactory answer.

What was intolerance? To whom should the charge be applied? Why, to him who desired to take from another a right—a right to worship God as he pleased or any other right the law gave him. And who was trying to do that very thing? Not he, who would not lift one finger to prevent any man from having whatever religion he chose—but the Catholics, he said, who were trying to take from him the right the law, the Constitution itself, gave him to speak or print his opinions of any sect, creed or organization. Whereas he had not attempted to take from any man his religion, they were trying to take from him a right guaranteed by the most fundamental law. Then

RÔLE OF REFORMER

who was intolerant? Should the term not be applied to any person or organization endeavoring to take away a man's constitutional rights?

But his opinions, his writings, were not to the liking of Catholics! Well, that was his affair; his opinions were his business. The thing for them to do was to go ahead with their own business. If he did not see fit to do so, he did not have to give over his constitutional right to criticise the Catholic Church simply because the Catholics wanted him to do it. And that the fundamental law of the nation and of the States expressly declared that a man had the right to inveigh against any political, religious or other organization or creed, by word of mouth or by the press, was not a matter even of argument. The Constitution itself said he had that right—and besides declared that Congress should make no law in any sense dealing with this guaranteed right.

But why did he wish to do it? Well, that was for him to say. Guaranteed rights would be no good if a man had to get somebody's consent before he could exercise them.

Moreover, Mr. Watson was not fighting Roman Catholicism alone of religious sects. In the very issue of his magazine in which appeared the first chapter on the hierarchy appeared an editorial on "The Foreign Missions Craze," one of the earliest chapters of his book, *Foreign Missions Exposed*. He had already attacked this system in his weekly, which makes it pertinent for us to be reminded that Watson attacked the Protestants before he attacked the Catholics. His whole fight on foreign missions was directed at the Methodist, Presbyterian and Baptist Churches, the last named of which had his own

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

membership. He fought this system as tenaciously as he did Catholicism and received for it almost as much abuse from Protestants as he received from Catholics for the fight on them.

✓ No especial caution was used and books of many kinds and times were used and quoted. The result was a prosecution in the United States District Court at Augusta for "violation of the postal law against sending obscene literature through the mails." The charge grew out of the sending through the mails that portion of the work on the hierarchy which carried an excerpt in Latin, quoted from another book, and alleged to be obscene language. The present writer makes no comment upon the truth or falsity of the charge by Mr. Watson that this prosecution was begun by the Catholics. The facts are that a federal grand jury indicted him as aforesaid, and at the November term, 1913, of the said court the case was called.

✓ There were at least a hundred lawyers offering their services free to the defendant. He could not use them all and intended to conduct the case himself anyway. There appeared for him, however, his old courthouse antagonist, Judge Twiggs, Hon. S. G. McLendon, of Atlanta, and Samuel L. Olive and William M. Fleming, of Augusta. He did not need them at this time, however, as his own motion to quash the indictment on the ground that it did not contain the entire article or chapter complained of was upheld by Judge Foster and the case thrown out of court.

This tactical victory for Watson was a disappointment to several hundred of his followers who wanted to hear him make a speech—it had been so long since he had appeared

RÔLE OF REFORMER

before the public. And while he was glad of the victory, it was also a matter of some regret to Mr. McLendon, who had prepared a very elaborate brief on the question of what is the press in the meaning of the Constitution, an answer to which the Supreme Court has not until this day made.

However, the United States Attorney drew a new bill of indictment, curing the defect of the former one, and Mr. Watson again faced the court. The case was fought out, but resulted in a mistrial at the hands of the jury.

When it was again called on November 27, 1916, this time with the Hon. W. W. Lambdin as Judge, a battle royal again was staged. The large array of witnesses appearing for the defendant, to testify to his good character and literary reputation, included his old school teacher, Robert H. Pearce, ex-Governors H. D. McDaniel and Joseph M. Brown, and Mrs. Rebecca Latimer Felton, who, so strange are the ordinances of fate, was to be, though only for two days, the defendant's successor as a Senator of the United States, and the first woman ever to be such.

The line of defense, embraced in a preliminary statement to the court and jury, testimony on the witness stand and argument to the jury, all by the defendant, and in the argument of Mr. Olive, was that for a thing to be obscene, its purpose must be such and its effect in keeping therewith; and that the whole article complained of negatived the former while the maintenance of the Latin in quoting avoided the latter.

The crowd got its chance to hear Watson this time. In fact, he was about all that was heard, for he dominated the trial. He said he had quoted from the 43rd edition of a

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

book which had been going through the mails out of New York since 1880, and that the Latin language alleged to be obscene had been in turn copied by it from another book which had copied it from still another—the last two being European works, one of which was by a Catholic theologian—and that he could not see why a man from the woods of McDuffie County ought to be singled out from this ramified publishing and republishing for prosecution. The fact that the book immediately quoted from had itself been going through the mails was ruled by the court to be inadmissible, but Watson got the idea across anyhow.

On the question of a thing being indecent according to the intention, custom or practice behind it, he harangued the jury on the perfect correctness of a bathing suit on the beach though not on a city street, of décolleté at a ball though not in a church pew and of frank discussions about diseases in a medical journal though not in a newspaper. He said he was dealing with a theological question, quoted the language for the benefit of the serious student wanting the exact truth, and maintained the Latin in doing so for the protection of the youth of the land.

He was acquitted.

Not satisfied after three rounds of the case the United States Attorneys, yielding to pressure from some source, declared Watson would be taken out of Georgia for trial—that the Government couldn't get a square deal in Georgia where Watson was concerned. A uniform cry of protest went up from the Georgia press. Mr. Watson wired J. J. Brown at Athens to go to Washington, call personally on the Attorney-General and inform him that Watson did not mean to submit to persecution, did not

RÔLE OF REFORMER

mean to go out of his State for trial, and that he would resist on his front steps to the death any United States marshal who put his foot on his place for the purpose of taking him out of Georgia. The message was delivered. Without assuming that this had anything to do with the Government's action, suffice it to say that the case was never re-opened.

CHAPTER XL

IN BEHALF OF THE STATE

IN the early part of 1914 one William J. Burns, a detective of wide repute, sponsored morally if not financially by a large portion of the press of the North and East, left New York for Georgia, promising to work a reversal of the Supreme Court of the latter State. The papers printed the promise.

The author deems it wise to say at this place that, while he is not called upon to advocate either side of the Leo Frank case, he feels no hesitancy in treating any material episode in the life of Thomas E. Watson. The materiality of certain aftermath of the Frank case to a true and faithful account of the career of Watson readily appears from the author's mere reminder that Watson was nationally branded as the murderer of Frank. Wherefore we are assuredly called upon to regard so highly sensational an episode.

The facts of this case, in so far as regards the crime itself, do not concern us and hence shall not be gone into. They relate, as will be generally recalled, to the murder in April 1913 of Mary Phagan (a young girl employee) at the place of business of Frank in Atlanta. At the other extreme of the events we find the lynching of Frank by a mob in September 1915.

The only additional formal facts that concern us are the following: Conviction of Frank of the murder August

IN BEHALF OF THE STATE

25, 1913; denial of a new trial by the trial judge October 31, 1913; affirmance of the trial judge's ruling by the Supreme Court of Georgia February 17, 1914; denial of a re-hearing in the Supreme Court by that court February 25, 1914; denial of a new trial by the court below (though not the same trial judge) moved for on the ground of newly discovered evidence May 8, 1914; affirmance of this ruling of the court below by the Supreme Court October 14, 1914; refusal of the court below to set aside the verdict moved for on the ground that Frank was not in court when the verdict was returned June 6, 1914; affirmance of this ruling of the court below by the Supreme Court November 14, 1914.

On February 11, 1915, *The Jeffersonian* carried as its leading contribution, by Mr. Watson, a 17-column article entitled: "A Demonstration of the Guilt of Leo Frank." This article was a general summary of preceding articles, the first of which appeared in January 1915. Mr. Watson's monthly publication, now styled simply *Watson's Magazine*, later dealt with the case in a similar manner.

What do these facts show as highly important to this episode? They show—they prove—unalterably a status that absolutely nullifies the most serious charge ever laid at the door of a prominent man by the press of the United States. They prove that Thomas E. Watson did not cause the lynching of Leo Frank. And if they prove it, the subject of this biography is eminently entitled to have it here said—for it is here said for the first time. How do these facts prove it?

By revealing that Thomas E. Watson never once opened his mouth about the Leo Frank case, in any form or fashion, until a year and a half after his conviction by

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

a jury of his peers, and his sentence to death by a competent court.

By revealing that Thomas E. Watson never once mentioned the Leo Frank case until a year after that conviction and sentence were upheld by the highest court in the State.

By revealing that Thomas E. Watson never once mentioned the Leo Frank case until more than six months after the extraordinary motion for new trial, containing the result of the William J. Burns labors, had been overruled, and until some three months after that decision had been upheld by the high court.

By revealing that Thomas E. Watson never once mentioned the Leo Frank case until six months after the motion to set the verdict aside had been lost in the lower court and until some two months after it had been lost in the high court.

But, the contention is probably made, what has all this to do with what caused the lynching in September 1915?

We are to be reminded that the determination to lynch Leo Frank, in case he did not hang, was made before his trial, the very first court proceeding, was over, as is abundantly proven by the fact that threats to that effect were made time and again during the trial, were reflected in the very newspaper reports in their accounts of the tenseness of the situation, and were admitted in fear and trembling by both Frank and his lawyers, who waived the prisoner's presence in court when the verdict should be returned, for which waiver they legally lost their motion to set the verdict aside on the ground that he was not so present.

So this would give one a quite brilliant opportunity to

IN BEHALF OF THE STATE

reconstruct the situation, if such one had hitherto accepted the accusation of the press—mainly in Chicago and New York—that Watson lynched Frank.

We are to remember that although Frank was not lynched until September 1915, not long after Governor John M. Slaton commuted his death sentence to life imprisonment, the conditional determination to do so had been figuratively “signed, sealed and delivered” before his trial ended. It was conditioned only upon whether he paid on the gallows; and when the order of the Governor forever made that impossible, the lynching went ahead. That it was not a lynching suddenly determined upon is proven by the circumstances thereof—the studied preparations, the fixed arrangements to get Frank out of the state prison, and the dispatch “without a hitch” with which the scheme was carried out.

But everybody knew that even before the trial was over there were plans brewing to lynch him, if the law did not exact his life eventually; and both Frank and his lawyers feared that he would be lynched upon the rendition of the verdict, if it was an acquittal or carried a life term. That is why he stayed in jail when the verdict was returned into open court. Whether they were justified in fear of an immediate lynching is a matter of opinion. The prevailing opinion was that there would be no lynching until after the processes established by law had finally resulted in no hanging.

That this situation prevailed, that it was recognized in official as well as private circles, is further borne out by the fact that Governor Slaton issued his commutation secretly in order that the sheriff might get Frank out of the Atlanta jail and to the state prison before the com-

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

mutation was known. This was the last stand; Frank had won life; the mob would now lynch. It immediately began its plans and executed them as soon as the details were worked out, which required considerable time.

Then if Mr. Watson is not chargeable with the Frank lynching, wherein lay the excuse for his going into the case at all? That excuse appears from the opening paragraph of this chapter. Hear him further as he speaks from the February 11, 1915, article alluded to above:

The great Atlanta dailies *might set Atlanta right*, on this matter which is *compromising the good name of the whole State*; but the Atlanta dailies either do not know the law, and do not know what evidence is in the official record, or they have some motive sufficient unto themselves to coerce them into bending their heads to this nation-wide tempest of misrepresentation, fabrication, and violent abuse.

Never were truer words spoken. The Atlanta papers, after deluging the State with all the sordid details of the case and the crime, thereby inflaming public passion to such a pitch that even the Governor had to call on them to stop, hung their heads when scores of newspapers throughout the country were reviling the State of Georgia, some denying that Frank was even tried at all according to law, and designating the trial judge and the Supreme Court as the tools of a depraved mob. They couldn't say a word in defense of their State. Oh, they did eventually; but that was after Watson had poured such a terrific fire into this maligning press that the people of Georgia declared they would stop taking the Atlanta papers if they did not fall in line.

This was why Watson took up the Frank case—in all

IN BEHALF OF THE STATE

the details of the evidence. He declared he would have to tear the case open and show piece by piece what it was upon which the verdict of guilty was returned, before he could vindicate the courts of Georgia. It goes without saying that he could not have done so by mere retaliatory denunciation, and he did not. His review of the Frank case is one of the most exhaustive things he ever did. He alone stopped the tide of abuse against Georgia—to him alone goes the credit. For it he was mercilessly cartooned and inveighed against. As will be conjectured by the readers of this work, he was the last man in the world to be deterred thereby.

The author, in full discharge of his own duty, must record a grievous mistake Mr. Watson made in the case before he left it. He diverted his attack from the enemies of the State to its own Governor. Governor Slaton commuted Frank's sentence. The law said he had the right and the power to do it. It is a power that a Governor can abuse, but the present writer has no right to say that he abused it. He does say that Mr. Watson's attack upon Governor Slaton for his course, in its every phase, was unwarranted and most discreditable to Mr. Watson. It resulted in a most effective cannonade fired upon Watson by Thomas W. Loyless, editor of *The Augusta Chronicle*, who deserves the credit for exposing the Watson abuse of Slaton as a most useless, cruel and undignified move.

But this last phase of the case was just one. We are to view the matter in its entirety. Only when we have done so are we competent to put the just and true estimate upon the Watson connection with the Frank case.

There is a not altogether unfounded report that his connection could have been far different, that he could

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

have appeared as Frank's lawyer. The present writer recalls that, after charges of the above nature were made against Mr. Watson, there appeared in *The Jeffersonian* a statement by Mr. Watson to the effect that the charges came with poor grace—after a futile effort to engage him as one of counsel for the defense. A large fee was offered him to appear before the jury with an argument, if no more than thirty minutes and without preparation. As what has gone before shows, this was before he had mentioned the Frank case. Supporters of Frank realized only too well the strategy of employing Watson. He refused to enter the case on the ground that he had withdrawn from the law practice, and without expressing any opinion upon its merits.

But what would have been the result had he accepted? Not improbably an acquittal, or at least a mistrial to be followed probably by an acquittal. For such a result would have largely depended upon the power of counsel to make over a state of mind—and there was no man in Georgia who could do that but Watson. Messrs. Rosser and Arnold did what they could for their client (upon whose guilt or innocence no opinion is expressed here), but they were as foreign to that peculiar thing needed by the defense in the Frank case as America is foreign to Mars.

What was it that Frank needed if he expected to get off? Not maneuvers or manipulations or sledge-hammer blows at witnesses or flatteries of jurors. He needed a man who had the power to shift the point of view, to recolor the situation—to make the thing the state charged appear an absolute impossibility. From the author's delineation of the Watson career up to this point the reader

IN BEHALF OF THE STATE

has altogether failed to receive the true impression if he has not seen Thomas E. Watson as a strategist of the first water, an advocate who pivoted his case not upon what could be done or should be done, but upon what was going to be done. But where was the prescience for this? It lay in his power to reconstruct the jury's mind while he was reconstructing the case.

CHAPTER XLI

THE SAGE OF HICKORY HILL

JUST as the years spent by Thomas Jefferson in retirement at Monticello brought forth the richest fruitage of his philosophy of life, so the 12-year period of Mr. Watson's immolation at Hickory Hill worked the crystallization of his regard of the world and its verdict upon him.

The campaigns of 1908 ended his activity in public life, save for the influence he wielded as "the sedentary mollywop" of the library, as he divertingly styled himself during the ensuing era, until 1920. He now had time for a still more varied correspondence with men of note, among them Elbert Hubbard, between whom and Watson it was "Dear Tom" and "Dear Elbert," Arthur Brisbane, and Theodore Roosevelt.

On March 20, 1909, Mr. Watson's mother passed away, bringing a great sorrow to this era of retirement.

As we have had occasion to observe, he was the arbiter of succeeding gubernatorial elections. His silence on the situation resulted in the election again of Hoke Smith in 1910; friends of Smith had come to the Sage with the petition to at least say nothing if he would not support Smith. He told them he had already made up his mind to say nothing.

Then the 1912 election of Slaton, the election of N. E. Harris in 1914, and that of Hugh M. Dorsey, Solicitor-General in the Frank trial, in 1916 and 1918 were all

THE SAGE OF HICKORY HILL

agreeable to and openly advocated by *The Jeffersonian*.

Howbeit Mr. Watson had praised the first administration of Smith as so signally notable, we are to understand that it was purely upon principle. It has already been indicated that Mr. Watson never had any personal love for Smith. The Governor had performed his pledges and Mr. Watson so said, but there never was a time when he really cared for the man personally. The personal view grew out of the "half and half" attitude of Smith ineradicably impressed upon Watson in 1906. There never was a time when Smith did not appear to Watson in the light of: "Well, I think you would be doing a valiant service to the public by coming forward with us at this time, not to say doing yourself proud; but, of course, I never make any promises about what I'll ever do. You know you were once a despised Populist and I must go slow. What will people say? But, of course, I'll let you work yourself to death for me if you'll do it."

Of course, Tom Watson was the last man in the world who could ever be fooled by any such attitude. If you were not his friend indeed he knew it all right. And nothing truer was ever said of him than that he never forgot it. Well, what had Smith done to him? Nothing but use him. Was it in a good and honorable cause any man might be proud to enter? Why, of course. Well, wasn't this reward enough for Watson—the honor of taking a prominent part in a great cause his own conscience approved? The answer is that it was not a question of reward—it was one of general disposition and attitude.

To go right to the heart of the matter, if you got the aid of Thomas E. Watson, you had to "come to taw." If

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

you didn't do it then you did it eventually or you heard from it. What the author means by "coming to taw" will quite clearly appear as we go along.

Hoke Smith has the record of being one of the very ablest statesmen Georgia ever produced. Forceful and magnificent on the stump, he was far abler after he had been crowned with the office. His administrative capacity was nothing short of marvelous. He has never made a promise to the people of Georgia which his record will not show he fulfilled or came very near fulfilling, whether as Governor or United States Senator, and in the latter office he fulfilled a great many big pledges he made the American nation. But Mr. Smith never did learn that fulfilling public pledges is one thing and manifesting private gratitude is quite another. He never did learn that the logic of telling a man who elected him to go and enjoy himself revelling in abstract victories was utterly hollow. Of course, Watson was glad the victories in principle had been won—and said so, giving Smith the credit. But would he, the real political boss of Georgia, put up with Smith's indifference, his "better than thou" air when he knew he had the power to pull the colossus down? Had he done so, he would have been the first political boss to do it. He knew Hoke Smith was no better than the rest of them. He had to "come to taw" too. Smith never did anything to Watson, but he tried to keep sweet with the Watson haters by ignoring him after his election. As the sequel will abundantly show, it was the most monumental political slip Hoke Smith ever made.

In 1911 Mr. Watson, having styled Smith as the "Hog-eye Man," for "wanting everything but caring to show thanks for nothing," went to Atlanta to prevent the

THE SAGE OF HICKORY HILL

Legislature from electing Smith, then Governor, to the United States Senate to succeed Senator A. S. Clay, deceased. He established headquarters in the Kimball House and sent out word for all his friends in the Legislature to come to see him. Much to his chagrin, said "friends" were mostly fictitious, for few came. The present writer, who slipped away from college to attend (and was almost expelled when it became known), recalls the stir this first emerging of the Sage from seclusion in three years caused. Curious spectators followed him all round the hotel corridors. Guests from far sections of the country asked "Is that Tom Watson?" The Sage, wearing a new linen suit from which he had overlooked to remove the tags, was in a considerable stir himself. But he accomplished nothing. Smith was elected to the Senate, took his time about resigning as Governor, and paid no attention to Watson. As the latter was trying to defeat his fondest ambition at that time, why should he? Watson returned home with a readjusted view of his power—what went with the masses did not necessarily go with the politicians, men themselves in politics. Of course, he knew all the time that Smith had the Legislature at his beck and call and that Watson's chances were slim, but the event reaffirmed his status of man of the masses and not of the machine.

The events of 1912 did the same thing. In fact, Mr. Watson's lack of power with the political managers almost resulted in his defeat for the insignificant place of delegate to the Oscar W. Underwood convention to be held in Atlanta to name delegates to the Democratic National Convention at Baltimore. Georgia had gone for Underwood, rejecting Woodrow Wilson in the preferential pri-

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

mary, and it was conceded on all sides that Mr. Watson's fight for Underwood in his paper was the main factor in carrying the State for him. Hon. Rufe Hutchins, Underwood's state manager, went into the newspapers to give Watson the credit.

When the naming of delegates from McDuffie County to the state convention came on Watson had to pull and tug with all his might to get on. He had printed that he meant to head the delegation to Baltimore. This was by no means to the liking of Thomas B. Felder, Atlanta lawyer, who said he was going to head that delegation. Watson thereupon designated Felder as "a ring politician who had had nothing to do with the real Underwood victory." It was true enough that Felder had not aided much in carrying the State for Underwood as he had no influence with the populace. It was now a fight between Watson and Felder—"Thomas E. and Thomas B.," as *The Atlanta Georgian* styled them. Felder issued a public statement that if Watson came to Atlanta he would "skin him like an eel."

Watson printed in his paper a "call to the Old Guard to meet me in Atlanta on May 11th." Eager to witness the response the author again deserted his college for two days, fabricating an excuse of being suddenly called to the city for providential reasons. He will never forget the sight. He boarded Mr. Watson's train at Covington, related to the Sage how fruitless had been his efforts to get the faculty of Emory College to invite Watson to address the students (Watson's fight on foreign missions made the president of the college afraid to invite him), heard much interesting conversation between Watson and Major McGregor, and detained in Atlanta amid such a

THE SAGE OF HICKORY HILL

throng that he had to traverse a back street to get to the Kimball House. The crowd which had responded to the call made a line that extended from the station to the clerk's desk at the hotel, through which Watson, wearing a blue serge suit with long-tailed coat and a western style wool hat, marched triumphantly.

Governor Slaton (who as President of the State Senate had become automatically chief executive upon Smith's elevation to the Senate), and former Governor Brown hastened to Mr. Watson with the petition for laying aside personal fights in order to have an amicable convention. Watson replied that he "had not sicked the dogs on and wasn't going to call 'em off."

Watson held his own caucus that night in the ball room of the Kimball. The hall was packed. He mounted a table, declared he meant to go to Baltimore, lock horns with Bryan and wrest control of the Democratic Party from his hands. (He had announced his return to that party in 1910.) He further said he meant to be chairman of the Georgia delegation. As he descended he spied Judge Twiggs down in front. Twiggs, still magnificent in stature but with head shaking with his great age (more than 80) mounted the table at Watson's request and delivered a speech, urging his election on the morrow as head of the delegation, and got down amid a din of cheers. It was the last time Watson saw Twiggs save at his trial in Augusta four years later.

In the convention at the Grand Theatre on the 12th Watson was the first man nominated. In his effort to get a handpicked delegation nominated immediately, he was howled down and Felder named to go with him. Watson men and Felder men were voted and both saw that

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

neither could be chairman. When the delegation met later to name its chairman, C. R. Pendleton, the Macon editor, was nominated by Watson and elected.

Watson did not go to Baltimore. He said he was seized with ptomaine poisoning, to which he was subject, but his excuse was not accepted by all. However, his alternate attended in his stead the famous meeting that nominated Woodrow Wilson.

The era we are now dealing with was that which made the Watson name as publicist. And diverse indeed are the developments of this decade. The Sage of Hickory Hill was lengthening his arm, touching many things and most persons of importance. He not infrequently gave his attention to persons of insignificance, answering their belligerent letters, in his paper. When the urge struck him, as it now rarely did, he called on "Old Man Peepul" and "Aunt Sarah Jane," terms by which he included both sides of the house, to meet him at a named place on a certain date where he would address them on eminently important events. Then he would return to his seclusion, continuing to be heard from in print to an alarming extent.

The readers of *The Jeffersonian* had to have their paper. It was a weekly tonic, and superseded its twin *Jeff*, the monthly, in favor. The weekly was a veritable tonic in small towns, on rural routes and in Atlanta. Other cities throughout the South were visited by it in scattered lots. The reason was the plainness with which Mr. Watson dealt with questions and persons. The paper, combative throughout, was deterred neither by friendship nor scruple. Congressmen who voted for the Cannon rules were "deserters." This warranted a probe of their private lives.

THE SAGE OF HICKORY HILL

L. F. Livingston, of the Atlanta district, was "Fanny Allen's man," and Charles G. Edwards, of the Savannah, was "Calico Charley." The former Watsonian title grew out of his charge of concubinage and the latter out of his story that Edwards had been seen in his office in Washington with a woman, wearing calico, in his lap, neither of which Watson ever substantiated.

He was frequently alluding to Bishop Warren A. Candler as "the proselyte of Coca-Cola"; and he gave a leading editorial to "The Rev. M. Ashby Jones Preaches a Papal Sermon." These Protestant clergymen fell in among Catholic priests in the Watson organ, all sharing a like fate. The things he wrote were unnecessary, based often upon wild rumor, but they were funny. Everybody who bought *The Jeffersonian* expected a big laugh, probably a dozen, and was never disappointed.

Taking to task a Catholic priest of South Carolina for having denied charges preferred by a Protestant preacher, Watson denominated the published statement of the priest as "nothing in the world but a honey-jar of lies."

We could do no better for illustrative matter than glance at his "knockout" editorial, very much deserved by a well known negro. Part of it ran:

"With statistics one can prove many things—the conclusion arrived at depending, in all cases, considerably upon the man behind the figures.

"This time the man behind the figures is Doctor Booker Washington—may his shadow never grow less!

"Proud of his statistics, Doctor Booker Washington exclaims: 'The negro race was developed more rapidly in the thirty years of its freedom than the Latin race in one thousand years of freedom.' . . .

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

"Do you imagine that your friends, President Roosevelt, Mr. Carnegie, Dr. Hart, Bishop Potter, and others, will like you better when they hear you putting forth a claim to race superiority? Doctor, you have over-shot the mark.

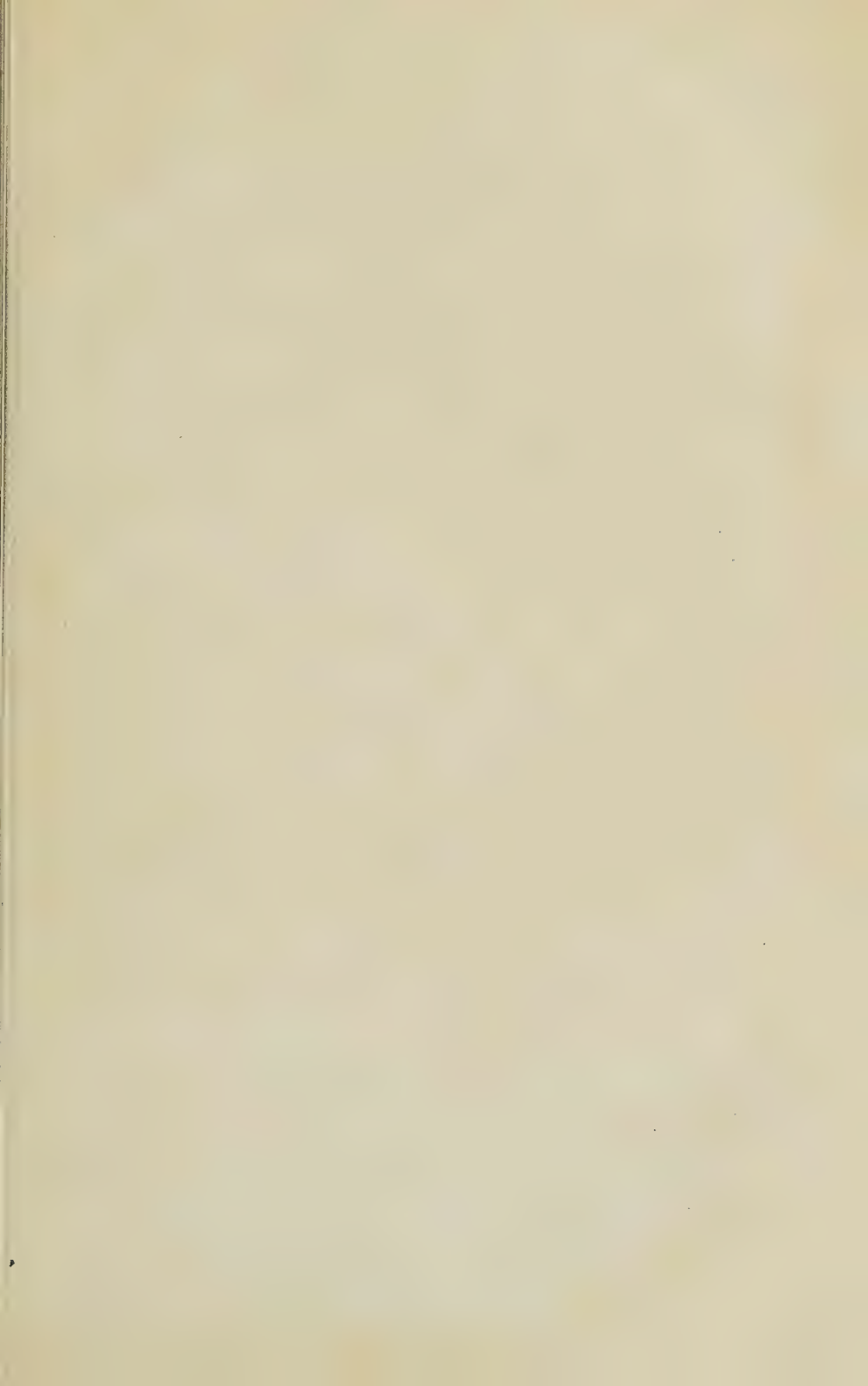
"Whenever the North wakes up to the fact that you are teaching the blacks that they are superior to the whites, you are going to feel the east wind."

Lawyers, preachers, editors, politicians, school-teachers and travelling salesmen came in for general survey at the Watson hands and he did not pretend to put any limit upon his enjoyment of the guaranty of free speech and press. Europe had furnished a goodly number of free lances after the order of Voltaire, but America now boasted the world's champion critic in personalities. Mr. Watson's record was leading the field, as he was now having something derogatory to say about everybody he could think of connected with American affairs from Christopher Columbus to Geraldine Farrar. In his "Story of the South and West" in his monthly magazine he scouted the claims to the discovery of America in behalf of the former; and in his weekly he alluded to "the burly beast of a Caruso and the unspeakable Geraldine Farrar."

He had renewed his attacks upon the character of Hoke Smith, repeating, without show of justification, irresponsible gossip of a scandalous nature. Editor F. L. Seely, of *The Atlanta Georgian*, was giving much space to showing the talk to be groundless.

While a great deal of these personal sallies were highly diverting, it is a well recognized principle in nature that anything can be overdone.

One morning in the latter part of December 1910 a well





THE SAGE OF
In Light and



HICKORY HILL IN 1913
Serious Mood

THE SAGE OF HICKORY HILL

dressed, prosperous looking man of middle years called at Hickory Hill and introduced himself as one Pond, a representative of a national advertising association whose object was to protect advertisers from publishers who made dishonest reports on their circulation. The man said he wanted to know whether Mr. Watson could verify certain reports he claimed to have received regarding "*The Georgian's* padded circulation and the land swindling schemes of its editor in Terre Haute, Indiana, and in Cuba." Pond told in detail what he said he had heard.

One afternoon shortly thereafter *The Georgian* carried on the front page an article by Mr. Seely stating that the next day *The Jeffersonian* "would carry the following editorial: 'The Last of the Carpetbaggers.'" The Seely article went on to print the text of the Watson editorial, which denominated Seely as that last carpet-bagger and went into "his record at Terre Haute, Ind., and in Cuba, as a land swindler," winding up by holding him up "as the man with the audacity to defend Hoke Smith."

Well, well; here was a situation indeed. Here was Watson's own editorial, exactly as it was in his own paper, printed and replied to before Watson had circulated a single copy. In fact, the thing hit Watson "slap in the face" that night as the week's edition of *The Jeffersonian* was going into the mails.

And there was Seely's reply all nicely done up in the same wrapper with the thing replied to, all done just in the right time—in time to beat Watson to the public but too late for him to stop his edition. Under the title, "The Last of Watson," Seely was holding up Watson to public scorn and saying: "Oh yes, I told you he was a liar

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

about Hoke Smith. Look at this huge tale he is printing on Seely—hatched in Seely's brain and told to Watson by a man Seely sent to his house for that very purpose."

Pretty tight place for Watson? In the wildest imagery it could hardly be conceived as tighter. Utterly sold out; hopelessly hoaxed. It was the talk of the State. Seely had not halted at taking advantage of a situation that put Watson in his power: in virtue of his paper being a daily and Watson's a weekly. Fully expecting Watson to use the Pond "disclosures," he had procured a prominent Thomson lawyer to secure one of the earliest copies of *The Jeffersonian* off the press and rush it to Atlanta on a midnight train some 24 hours before the weekly would get in the mails.

Yet, strange as it may seem, the fertile mind of Watson was not without its come-back even here. What in the world could it be? Why simply that Seely had "added to his land frauds the abandoned deception of a man who willingly admitted he had been deceived by a brace of consummate liars." In addition he published the statement of a lady from Tennessee then visiting in Thomson to the effect "that one F. Loring Seely had in fact done the things he had charged to F. L. Seely; and hence the Atlanta editor had really armed Pond with the truth when he sent him to Thomson, expecting to offset the whole thing by telling of the hoax." He detailed that "Pond said a man in a bar-room told him of Seely's scrape in Cuba, and who was this man in the bar-room? Seely, perhaps." He then took umbrage under their common callings.

"Nice man for our profession, isn't he? Quite an ornament to American journalism. When the London *Times*

THE SAGE OF HICKORY HILL

was duped in the matter of the Phoenix Park murders, it was not a brother editor who did *the dirty work*. It was a man of the very worst character, a liar and a forger."

He went on to state that he did not even try to learn Pond's full name and standing as he had no intention of using the matter at the time, and did so only after "the wholly independent corroboration" of the Tennessee lady.

Regardless of any of these assertions, proof that he would use defamatory matter without the slightest scruple or verification was here proven. But what was the result? The one usual in such cases—dismissal of the affair as a "scrap" between newspaper men. Of course, the Smith men said "Watson was now shown up in his true colors and forever discredited"; but little good it did them, for the Watsonites were not the kind who cared for the trifling matter of a little lie or two between gentlemen. They merely laughed it off.

Seely's pose of vicarious reformer, "trying to take care of Smith when the latter wouldn't open his mouth," as Watson put it, notwithstanding the neutralizing effect his shrewd tactics had upon Watson's fight on Smith, was a total failure as a make-over of Watson, for it was based upon a false conception of the motives of Watson. Seely was going on the idea that all the muckraking Watson did grew out of a personal hatred and desire to destroy. The author has revealed enough of the Watson nature to wholly negative this view. The wholesale attacks on practices and characters being made by Watson grew primarily out of his cast as satirist. Reports came to him about public men; he did not hesitate to use them for what they were worth, though often enough they were not

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

worth anything. The Sage was in the reviewing stand. He said what he pleased of the procession. The hollow cry of mediocre editors of "In heaven's name, what is the matter with Watson" made no impression whatever upon him. It was just as natural for him to talk plainly about a politician's private life as of his public life, and he exercised no real scruple in what he said. When the time came for him to take politicians to task, he went into everything he knew or had heard of. He expected them to reply with the same abandon; and if they foolishly held up their hands in horror instead of doing so, it was their lookout.

Furthermore, the personal attacks, regardless of their strict truth, were doing boundless public good along with individual wrong. The people began to watch their public men—to inquire into their personal characters. They had never done so before. Hitherto opinions had been based on practical considerations and on public issues. With the advent of the fierce critic of Hickory Hill, his denunciations, his demands "that this man be driven from office into the oblivion he deserves," came sudden readjustment in the office holder; he now took thought of himself because the people were taking thought of him.

Of course, there were the "come-backs" at Watson. The politicians, lashed into a frenzy by him, tried to reply in kind and always failed. They invariably dug up that old charge about "he sold out to the Republicans in 1904 for \$40,000." Charge it was all they could ever do. The author has before him as he writes a mass of letters written to Watson in 1905 by N. A. Dunning from Los Angeles and Hollywood, California, threatening the institution of suit against Watson and George B. Cortelyou, Roosevelt's Secretary of the Treasury, unless Wat-

THE SAGE OF HICKORY HILL

son and Cortelyou forked over \$5000 to keep Dunning quiet "about the dicker I arranged between you and Cortelyou in 1904, which, if known, will ruin you both."

The letters of Dunning, written from a sanitarium, were ignored by both Watson and Cortelyou, save that whereas Secretary Cortelyou dared Dunning to do his worst by silence, Watson dared him to do the same by written reply. Dunning went on to say that consideration of his wife alone kept him "from blowing his brains out for the shameful manner you and Cortelyou have used me and then cast me aside." The man, telling of his terrible state of health in one sentence and "the cruel ignoring of me by Cortelyou" in the next, kept on writing his "last" letter. He wrote not less than nine "last letters," averaging about 1500 words each, that the present writer knows of, and no telling how many more that he has not seen. He said he could sell his "story" to a big metropolitan newspaper for five times the sum he demanded, "but hated to do it though I have been treated like a dog." It is a safe bet he never got anything out of Watson or Cortelyou.

Debts began piling up as the two *Jeffs* were run with less attention to advertising. Mr. Watson was forced to sell a magnificent estate he owned in Virginia to pay out on one occasion. He now owned several splendid farms, totalling 9000 acres of the best land in McDuffie County, and the increase from these was being utilized in keeping the publishing business going.

Mrs. Lytle made herself of invaluable service. She could do anything required to be done, editorial work, teaching the Watson grandchildren or keeping house. Originally quartered in a cottage hard by, she was now promoted to a residence in the Sage's mansion. An addi-

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

tional weekly paper was projected for Durham and her, *The Progressive Democrat*, to which Mr. Watson contributed, but it did not live long.

The varied talents of this woman included the capacity to entertain. With a highly flexible disposition, Mrs. Lytle could wear the mask of optimism and good cheer whether she felt them or not. When "the Chief," as she dubbed Mr. Watson, was in one of his despondent moods, Mrs. Lytle often could do more with him than could Mrs. Watson, though not always. She possessed a power of adaptation of personality the wife, with all her great qualities, did not know. Mrs. Watson was wonderfully gifted in lightening her husband's heavy spirit, but there were times when sweetness, tender wifely love, were not the remedy. It was sometimes joyousness, buoyancy, ringing laughter that did the work.

There was another role in which Mrs. Lytle appeared to better advantage than did Mrs. Watson—in the matter of drinks. The author hastens to explain that the Sage was now receiving regular shipments of very fine, expensive wines from California, in vinegar casks. He drank wine with his midday meal and he drank it when politicians were gathered at his seat, especially when there was something of great importance being laid before him by political leaders close to him. Though Mrs. Lytle did not sit at these conferences, she served the wine at convenient intervals.

The strain of intense mental life and arduous toil over a long period was reacting upon the Sage. With reaction came heightening of his irascible disposition. His chief enemy—a violent temper—got the upper hand now with more frequency than before. However, there was noth-

THE SAGE OF HICKORY HILL

ing even now that matched an incident of some 15 years earlier, quite conveniently recorded here, when Mr. Watson rendered physical proof of the claim of his greatest admirers that "he was not afraid of a circular saw."

Tom and his brother, Forrest, owned jointly a saw mill near Thomson. One day Tom repaired to the mill bent upon settling a difference between the brothers as to the output of the mill over which Forrest was superintendent. An argument arose, Forrest showing no more disposition to yield than Tom.

"All right, I'll settle the whole damn thing right now, then," yelled Tom as he seized a sledge-hammer and attacked the huge circular saw running at top speed. He battered the disc of steel into a state of unserviceability, threw the hammer down and walked off.

Now, in the latter years, there were again times when a violent rage seized him, but we are without any casualty list. There is the report that he offered to pay a young lady living near him the price of her piano if she would quit playing it, which is not capable of further foundation than a note he made in one of his private books that "the young lady across the way is deluding nobody but herself into believing she is an artist at the keyboard." If the incident occurred, it was probably before Mr. Watson's residence at Hickory Hill, which is completely isolated. It is known that he frequently paid boisterous boys, playing in front of the former home, liberal cash to move farther down the street. Disturbed, he would hasten out, demand how much they wanted to move, and "shell it out" to them as soon as they replied. He was frequently known to buy a neighbor's dog or chicken and have it killed to stop its bark or cackle. No sum of money

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

was too large for him to pay to stop any disturbance or nuisance near him, and there was no haggling. He demanded how much, paid it on the spot, and got immediate relief.

He loved little Georgia Lee beyond measure. She was his pet and had the run of the house. Upstairs hard at work in his library though he might be, her whims had to be humored. She would tug and pull up the stairs, toddle into the work room (Mr. Watson did his editorial work at his home) and demand to be taken to ride. Grandpa refuses. Georgia Lee primps up for a cry, and down go book, pencil and paper and Grandpa does as she wills. He mounts his fine horse, takes Georgia Lee up in front and away they go for an hour's gallop. One day the horse shied and Grandpa almost let Georgia Lee fall, but whenever she begged for a ride she got it.

The Sage's mind was delving into many things. Lover of art, he had saved through the years lithographs of famous paintings. But greater to him were the trees he had planted at Hickory Hill, shutting off all view of the house from the road, peopled by the birds he studied and the squirrels he fed. The little denizens would climb to the window of his library each morning to be fed nuts almost out of his very hand. His knowledge of birds was great, though he wrote little of them. The study of nature was to him a reverie that he lived, and revealed only in prose-poems that marked long periods in his seclusion.

Reveries brought memories, and how delicately did he tune the melancholy strain of his poetic soul in "Rose on the Snow." It was a crisp autumn morning. Mr. Watson and his loving wife walked together in the gorgeous woods of Hickory Hill. All the past came back—the



HICKORY HILL

THE SAGE OF HICKORY HILL

great love he had borne this child of a strange fortune, and the pure devotion she had ever shown him. It was one of those rare days that come to deep souls when memories are so great that words do not come. Hand in hand they walked on—living again in all their overwhelming fullness the days of their journey down life's pathway. They were drawn on, they did not seem to be directing their steps. And then they stopped—yes by the grave of little Louise, the precious treasure the father and mother had cried over these many years, weeping in silent agony each Christmas eve as they placed the presents for Son and Daughter. There she lay—just as a rose on the snow, and they could hear her say again: "Just let me sleep, Mama," as she said when the angel came to bear her away on snow-white wings to wait for them somewhere—somewhere they now hoped to go with all the faith they knew, as they turned away to face again the same world of care and labor they had left in the longing to live once more that day when the poor lawyer laid all at the feet of the queenly woman who was to walk with him thenceforth.

CHAPTER XLII

SHADOWS

THE sum of the years of toil now issued from the *Jeffersonian* press in the collected editorial work. The Sage's "Prose Miscellanies" and "Sketches" furnished permanent form for the best of his writings in the magazine and the weekly paper. Booklets in considerable variety appeared to preserve the later historical work. His exposé, "Socialists and Socialism," upheld the private ownership of land as the bulwark of the home. It was well, for soon the hand of the government was to be laid upon the labors of Thomas E. Watson just at the time the hand of death was to fill his house and his heart with tragedy.

Afflicted now with incurable asthma, Mr. Watson was compelled to resort often to drugs as his only relief. Impairment of his own health was followed close by the death of Agnes on August 30, 1917. The sad event brought a despondency from which it was almost impossible for him to be freed at any time, and from which he never recovered.

The great war was now enveloping the world. He opposed the entrance of the United States. He severely attacked President Wilson for asking Congress for the declaration of a state of war. His editorials became extreme and overstepped the limits which should bind a man after his country has declared war. The Postmaster-General ordered his publications excluded from the mails

SHADOWS

and the Thomson office accordingly refused to receive them.

For years Mr. Watson had attacked Wilson, declaring that the Princeton head "had never been anything but a smug Down-easter, as evidenced by the elaborate treatment he gave in his American history to the most insignificant persons and events of New England and the contemptuous notice he gave great men and events of the South." He said Wilson considered many a common laborer of New England of more importance than the Vice-President of the Confederacy. Hence when the Postoffice Department shut him out of the mails he blamed Wilson mainly.

However, he was visited with a summary treatment on the ground that he was waging a defeatist fight and working the evasion by young men of draft into military service. His case and fate were widely noticed and there were those who felt he was being visited with especial persecution. Theodore Roosevelt, accorded the floor of the United States Senate, declared the Government had unjustly singled out Watson, that there were other, more dangerous enemies of the war being let alone. He said all of them should be muzzled, especially certain daily papers whose circulation made Watson's altogether insignificant.

There was no relenting, and the serious illness, approaching dangerously near nervous prostration, ensuing upon Agnes' death, was made still more a matter of grave concern to Mrs. Watson and Mrs. Lytle by the blow from the Government. They finally persuaded him to go to his newly acquired winter home at Hobe Sound, Fla., to rest.

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

Here the other tragedy came to render more complete the fall of his house. Durham came to Florida seriously ill. He underwent an operation, revealed far less vitality than his doctors believed he possessed and sank into coma. Aroused in his intense suffering, it was necessary to hold him on his bed. On April 8, 1918, in a frenzy of agony he rose suddenly; Mr. Watson rushed to his side, and he expired in his father's arms.

Again they must go to Thomson, now to bury out of their sight the last of the children God had given them. Many were the days and nights now spent in agony of grief. His children gone, his work gone, the Sage of Hickory Hill was now indeed a figure of tragic gloom. Waking in the stillness of the night, he would weep for his children and become so overwhelmed with grief that often his wife or Mrs. Lytle would have to go to his room upstairs to quiet him. When Georgia Lee began playing on the piano the pieces her mother had played, Grandfather would always stop her; it brought Daughter back in melancholy memory.

He, Mrs. Watson and Mrs. Lytle went back to Hobe Sound. In June the author of this work, now in the military service, wrote a letter to the Sage, to carry him, if it could, some word of consolation. He urged Mr. Watson to return to Georgia and gain palliation of his great grief in labor in America's great common cause.

"Come back, come back now when Georgia needs you to aid in the fight to lift the heel of militarism from the neck of valiant France and its ominous figure from the world's horizon." He also urged him to plunge once again into the political arena where haply his mind would find some diversion from its gloom. The author recounts

SHADOWS

the incident because of its direct bearing upon the state of the Sage at this time. He offers the reply for the commentary upon self it contains:

MY DEAR MR. BREWTON,

Your noble and generous letter touched me deeply. I have not received one that appealed to me with equal power.

It was my misfortune to inherit the sanguine temperament heavily shaded by melancholy. My father used to be virtually paralyzed for weeks by what he called "the blues," and this depression would come upon him before he was 40 years old and before he had lost a single child.

Judge what my constitutional tendency has done for me, when all my children are dead and when I am nearly 62 years old, and when the Government has deprived me of the occupation which was almost as dear to me as life itself.

No, I cannot yet "come back," if ever. It is with genuine regret that I write you in this strain, but I know you prefer for me to tell you the truth.

Yours truly,

THOS. E. WATSON.

Yet strange indeed are the workings of fate. For ere the summer closed, ere Mr. Watson had hardly reoccupied Hickory Hill, a delegation of political friends besieged him with the urge that he offer for Congress in the approaching election against Carl Vinson, the incumbent. He at first said he couldn't think of such a thing, but finally yielded. Time was short and these gentlemen paid his entrance fee before he actually came to a decision. They told him to stay quiet and rest and they would do all the work.

A little campaign in the newspapers—largely by big

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

display advertisements—was waged against him by the Vinson backers. He was held up as a defeatist in the war and as unfit to hold office. Mr. Watson, in the few speeches he made, divertingly alluded to the Augusta ring, which was running the newspaper campaign as numbered, serial articles, as “the reading club,” declaring its effusions were merely going the rounds of its own members.

He ran a most unexpected race. In fact, the contest narrowed down to Wilkinson County where the result was in doubt for nearly a week. The election managers finally gave the county to Vinson. Watson undertook to contest the election in that county before the State Executive Committee, contending he won the majority of votes therein. It did no good; he lost the certificate to Vinson.

Feeling he must engage his mind with the work to which it had been now confined for many years, Mr. Watson bought *The Columbia Sentinel*, then printed at Harlem, near Thomson, and moved it to the Jeffersonian plant. He was compelled to send the paper by motor truck to Harlem for mailing until the Thomson post-office could be re-opened to him. This was eventually done and *The Sentinel* continued his official mouthpiece the remainder of his life.

CHAPTER XLIII

I CALL HIM GREAT

IN the order of nature—our verdict lieth there. The age-old error: judging the world and its creatures after the individual “impression.” Men have yet to learn the lesson of history. Philosophers have learned it; the masses have not. It is that the composite mind of the world is not the individual mind enlarged. It is that the “I think so and so” of the individual has nothing to do with whether the thing is as thought. It is that the conclusion of time—history—has no relation to individual opinion; and is not a matter of agreement among men, as there can be no agreement; but is made in nature. It is that history’s verdicts, because they are not made by opinions, are not controlled by men. But, interposes the objector to this view, does not the historian, an individual, create general opinion by the stamp he puts upon a man or event? The reply is that, whereas there is no power to prevent men joining in his view, there is also no power to prevent another historian from announcing a different view—and another, and still another, forever. Thus there can be established no tribunal of authority and hence no control of the verdict. This being true universally, it is left by nature to say what the future shall do with us. By nature, the author is to be understood as reminding the reader that men are a part of the maelstrom of nature just as are the elements; and that what the composite mind of

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

the world does can only be the edict of nature; because if one man, particularized, has not the power to mold a permanent view, and the same be true of every other single man, then all men together—the world of beings—has not this power actively, but it is worked in the order of nature.

Wherefore we do not have to worry about what history will do with Thomas E. Watson, because this is beyond our control. For that reason individual opinions are worthless as regards a world view. Every man in his own humor, but nature careth not.

The author's mind is fully made up for himself. He is not loath to give the reader the benefit of it. He is glad to do so, for he is convinced he is abundantly justified in his view.

Though we have not reached the end of the Watson public career, we are arrived at the point where all things are done upon which history's verdict shall be founded, in the present writer's opinion.

And, in that opinion, there is no truer admeasurement than that which is based upon the very thing of which we have been speaking—nature. Did he live in the order of nature?—that is the question by which we should be guided.

A characteristic of the modern age is ephemerality—"everything by turns and nothing long." Refusing to think for themselves, men today are buying their thoughts from the newsdealer or accepting them from the preacher. Mr. Watson had so little respect for such a course that few persons knew him intimately. Those who did were free of respect for the opinions of the world, free of fear.

One of the few who were close to him was Mrs. Lytle, who understood every peculiarity of his nature. Indus-

I CALL HIM GREAT

trious, she had his respect; buoyant, joyous, without bland optimism, she had his great admiration. She possessed many qualities the aging Watson felt he required in his life, and which his wife did not possess. Mrs. Watson knew she had her husband's love; she also knew that there were times when Mrs. Lytle's personality suited the situation better than her own. A wife of deep love, unbounded devotion to husband and duty, she lacked that versatility of disposition, that flexibility of mood and manner which was now absolutely indispensable in the economy of the Watson make-up. His overwhelming melancholy had to be neutralized. Mrs. Lytle could do this better than any person who ever entered the Watson life; though in illness, in the grasp of some overpowering grief, Mrs. Watson was the only person who could bring calm and resignation to the master of Hickory Hill, for she had journeyed down life's pathway with him and knew all.

Yet we are to understand that a man who labors under the strain that went with all the Watson work must have relaxation, diversion, or he cannot go on. The sunshine of the Lytle nature provided this—at least in good degree, for there never was a time when Mr. Watson's nature was wholly freed from the shading that accompanies intense spirituality. There is ground for the belief, however, that the Lytle influence was not always for the best, that she used it to advance selfish ends many times.

Now, in achieving an estimate of Watson, we are not to avoid any of those already abroad in the world. This writer is disposed quite candidly to examine each of them. How much of truth, how much of untruth do they contain? The view of faultless, held by his old guard, we

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

do not consider as it is too palpably that of hero worship. The derogatory ones are more in point here. What do his enemies say? That he was the slave of his impulses; that he would ruin where he could not rule; that he turned against every man who was his friend; that he had no regard for the truth; that he would sacrifice every principle for revenge or money.

This writer has already detailed the facts showing that Watson had the courage to say what he thought, reveal what he felt. It is in line to say further that he often spoke in deep regret to his wife "for words that had brought tears to her eyes." He shall be condemned for those words; but, unlike the mediocre hypocrite, he shall be lauded for that only true sincerity which caused him to admit the fault to the world.

Would he rule or ruin? In his leadership he was of a verity the born leader. He retreated not from the urge that was in him. Unlike Bryan, the tool of his party, Watson was the essence, the force, the driver, the ruler of his. If destiny willed he should be such, he would be found not wanting only as he rose to it.

Turned against every friend? Ah, how often they have charged this as they have that he "flopped" from one side of the political situation to the other. Who have charged it most? The men who prayerfully invaded Hickory Hill to seek his aid, and got it on specific promises, which they invariably broke before he turned against them. The charge of "turning," the bane of weak politicians, had no terrors for Watson, who turned when he pleased. They turned not—but why? Because they were afraid of the people. The Watson position depended not upon whether he turned. It was grounded upon his definitive character

I CALL HIM GREAT

of leader, not follower. The "flopping" applies, indeed, to his course as regards men, of whom nature has a wondrous supply, but all are invited to show wherein the fundamentals of his creed ever saw departure.

No regard for the truth? He wrote and spoke many untruths in their letter; he did not even claim to let accuracy of details halt the swift preachment of his generalizations. But if he spoke more untruths than many men, he also proclaimed more truth than most men of his time, out of his greater courage.

Revenge or money more to him than principle? Then explain his loss of \$200,000, actual money out of his personal income, in his fight on Roman Catholicism. In the ten years he waged it one piece of property after another was sold to keep his presses going. But there is definite, positive proof of his losses here, for no sooner had the chapters on Romanism begun than advertisers in both his publications began withdrawing their business, never once deterring Watson who, from month to month, published their names as a "Roll of Dishonor." Unlike Hubbard, whose preachments were made with care not to offend business heads for whom he wrote national advertisements, Watson began his preachments with business, continued them when they lost him business, and then defiantly held up for the notice of the world "the houses who let the priesthood dictate their business as well as their beliefs."

That he started poor but did not stay poor we lay only to his credit. That he loved not money as much as many men who declared it was first with him is proven by the fact that his family in all of its branches were the recipients of his bounty from the time his career began. His wife's foster parents, his sister, Durham and his wife and her

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

parents, his old music teacher, and friends too numerous to recount were largely supported by Mr. Watson for many years. And the items of expense to him go beyond mere livelihood; they include hospital bills, surgical operations and funerals. Agnes and his granddaughters were also recipients of his bounty.

He was revengeful. He hesitated not to call you to account if you ever wronged him or lied to him. He was held down by no fear of what people would say "of this prominent man stooping to engage in personalities with an insignificant person." That he often overshot the mark is true enough, often wrongly accused another is true enough. But that he ever formed himself politically upon a personal consideration cannot be admitted here, as this writer was given abundant proof to the contrary.

On the night of October 1, 1913, the author went to Hickory Hill in an interest of his own and in behalf of a friend in another matter. He detailed to Mr. Watson that a lawyer of a certain Georgia county was in the race for Congress and had asked the author to do what he could on this visit to secure the Watson aid, being especially careful to point out that the lawyer had never supported Hoke Smith for anything.

The Sage looked straight into the face of the author as he laid the whole matter before him. Then he very deliberately said:

"Mr. Brewton, go back and tell your man that neither he nor any other man can ever get my support on friendship with my friends or enmity to my enemies, or upon any other pretext whatever save that of an open platform of the principles of Jeffersonian democracy."

He then showed this writer the most wholehearted in-

I CALL HIM GREAT

terest and sympathy for a struggling law student he ever knew, lavishing both words of encouragement and books upon him.

When John L. Cartlidge, of a neighboring county, went to McDuffie many years ago as the superintendent of the Watson farms, he was told he had just as well give it up—that he would never get along with Tom Watson. To-day in Thomson, still in charge of many of those lands, Cartlidge declares: “From the day I first went to work for him there was never a disagreement between Mr. Watson and me, nor did he ever question me about a penny, nor did I ever fail to get all the consideration and ample remuneration my services deserved.”

Yet, all these are mere details that go to a man’s daily life. These are not the things that determine the verdict this author returns. It comes from the consideration of how Watson lived the forces that were within him and how he faced the forces that were without.

He heard the call of nature and nature’s God to be free. He saw the thralldom of the masses, following it knew not what, and he taught men to be free in their rights and free in their thoughts. He met the challenge of the subserviency of a man’s mind anywhere, to the press, to the state, to the church. He walked among men and was unafraid; he called forth from the archives of the past the achievements and thoughts of men and admeasured them without fear; he moved through the forests of nature in communion with their Creator undaunted by fear of fate—this mightiest apostle of individualism of his day—and I call him great.

CHAPTER XLIV

DECREE OF DESTINY

Now was the opinion quite in general expressed that Watson was in the discard for good. Men, calling up vivid recollections of the Watson of the '90's and 1906, declared with an air of finality: If he had just stayed in the Democratic Party, he could have been President; if he had refrained from fighting everything and everybody, he could have had anything he wanted.

How true it is that nature bestows the analytic, the philosophic mind upon the few. Slight reflection should be sufficient to convince any man that Watson's departure from the Democratic Party was what made him a national figure—the controlling power of a party of his own. To have remained one among many never would have focussed attention upon him. Of course, no man can declare with certainty that he never would have landed in the President's chair as a Democrat, but a careful consideration of all that was involved makes it extremely doubtful. Why? Because the forerunner, the reformer, the evangel never reaps the reward in politics. He was these, of a verity, as wide adoption of many of the principles he preached shows. Yet he preached many that never were adopted. His views on money, on the tariff, on general governmental economy have not been adopted; and we are not without warrant in concluding that these could have kept him out of the high office to which he unquestionably aspired.

DECREE OF DESTINY

So Watson did more for his political fame by pursuing the course this narrative has disclosed than he could have done in the ranks of a party signal for many other able, forceful men.

This conclusion applies with even greater force to the criticism that the Watson combativeness was his undoing. Undoing how? Was he ever undone? His rôle of iconoclast is that which establishes his name—the name for the distant future. We have the lessons of history to support this view, though the truly analytical mind does not require them. For a man to occupy a position none other of his day occupies is certain to make that man's name live. It matters not that individual error or injury are committed. Who shall remember or care in the years that are to come what Watson said or thought of this or that politician? No one. That which shall be remembered is that here was indeed a man unafraid to assail anything—a man so given to ends made for him by nature that he defied the whole world in order to live them. A distinct, positive man.

Yet we are not limited to abstractions in establishing our conclusions here. The truly positive force must come back. Submerged, thrust into oblivion, it may thus remain for a season; but eventually the people return to that man they know—that man whose conflict and course are so definite they understand them throughout. And here is the lesson Watson tried to teach his generation of politicians: If you want to amount to anything permanently with the people, be something—some particular thing, not just anything. He did not wholly succeed, for there never was a time in the history of his State when weaker men rose to political prominence than those it

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

honored in his last years. Yet his axiom holds true, for no weak man ever survives a real test, the test of a fair number of years. Mediocrity which begot him will assuredly call him home to eternal oblivion.

Why could there be no oblivion for Watson? The answer calls up the explanation of the Watson greatness and the reason his personal following loved him with an unshakeable, a deathless devotion, a devotion never bestowed upon another Georgian in Watson's day. Not for another Georgian of his day were there thirty thousand men who would readily yield up their lives for their leader. These would do so for Watson; it was often proven: in the constancy of their letters to him, their prayers for him, their contributions of hard-earned money to him and his work. Why? It was because they knew that Watson had ever fought their fight in all his career; had ever raised his voice for those who were oppressed, not by speaking words of sympathy, but by openly denouncing their foes when it took courage to do it, courage so abundantly shown by Watson, in comparison so lacking in all the other public men of his State in his day. Was he the only great man in Georgia of his day? Certainly he was not. But we speak of that thing which makes a man loved instead of being admired or approved—loved without stint, without the paling of love. It was his courage they could not forget; courage to throw command at them as well as at those they considered their enemies in State and nation; open, glorious courage to defy friend as well as foe. Herein lies the answer to the question men have asked throughout the nation—of why Watson carried his personal following as in the hollow of his hand. That few men ever have been known to so do, argues only

DECREE OF DESTINY

the rarity of the gift which nature so positively bestowed upon Watson.

In the spring of 1920 Senator James A. Reed, of Missouri, toured a good portion of the nation as the leading antagonist of the League of Nations. His zeal brought down the wrath of President Wilson upon him—wrath that had administered a crushing defeat to an equally fearless opponent of the League in 1918, Senator Thomas W. Hardwick, whose candidacy for a return to the United States Senate President Wilson openly opposed, securing election by the people of Georgia of his personally picked and approved candidate, W. J. Harris.

The Presidential campaign of 1920 was fought out on a strictly League and anti-League platform. Many of the States suddenly confronted the nation with favorite sons. In Georgia Senator Reed was making strong headway, but when his colleague in the Senate, Hoke Smith, made it known that he wanted his State's preference, Senator Reed withdrew from the race in Georgia. Senator Smith's platform on the League was a cross between the two extremes. He advocated a League with reservations, one that did not necessitate any alteration of our Constitution. There were other Senators who supported this position. The pro-League candidate, a Wilson favorite, was Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer. Reed spoke in Georgia, aroused still greater antagonism to the League, withdrew out of courtesy to Smith, and then Smith and Palmer spoke in that State.

Mr. Watson, fierce foe of the League of Nations, wrote Senator Reed with great urge to remain in the race in Georgia, pointing out that "you are the only man our people who won't swallow the League can vote for without

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

stultifying their consciences." The Missourian did not see his way clear to comply. Whereupon, Mr. Watson, now in bad health, caring not for further political turmoil that involved himself as a candidate, announced that he would forego every consideration of a personal and private nature, "and make the race for my people who have no one for whom they can vote."

The announcement was greeted with derision by the old Watson enemies who declared he had been "shelved so long he was dusty." However, men who had never been for Watson began saying they would vote for him before they would vote for the League of Nations. They had had enough of war, they said.

Well, this latter sentiment caught fire; began sweeping the State. Nobody would have believed it; but on April 20th, in Georgia's Presidential preferential primary, Thomas E. Watson polled the largest number of votes. The returns were: Watson 50,808; Palmer 47,459; Smith 44,863. The State was shocked. Here was the Sage of Hickory Hill, supposed to have only 30,000 votes he could control—just the Old Guard—come back. And strong it was, too. Men began to mumble and then to talk out that this vote for Watson meant something—that it would continue to be heard from.

Then ensued a fight between Watson men and supporters of Palmer, next in the vote, as to which candidate was to get the State's delegation to the National Democratic Convention at San Francisco. Palmer secured a plurality of convention votes—140 to Watson's 130 and Smith's 114—by reason of having been victor in most of the big counties, and Watson had the popular plurality. The upshot of the situation was that both factions

DECREE OF DESTINY

sent delegations to San Francisco, each claiming to be the true, legal delegation. Naturally, the Democratic convention's committee on credentials refused to seat a delegation openly opposed to the President where it had a chance to seat one of the other variety. As the convention adopted the committee's view and as there was no appeal, the Watson delegates were just out. They came on home. This author does not pretend to pass on the legality of the convention's action. It claimed it seated the delegation most entitled to the seats.

Regardless of who was seated, the important fact in the entire event is that Watson had come back. All knew it; his friends rejoiced; his enemies shuddered; but it was only too plain. There were those who told Watson that refusal of the convention to seat his delegates when he had received the largest vote would only react in his favor, serving to solidify a sentiment just begun.

We are to understand that Mr. Watson sensed this situation as well as anybody. He sensed it so keenly, in fact, that he announced his candidacy for the United States Senate against Hoke Smith. The announcement was greeted with a most pronounced renewal of anti-League expression. The Wilsonites—for the pro-League voters were virtually all staunch supporters of the President personally—brought out Governor Hugh M. Dorsey, contending that Senator Smith was "straddling" the League question. Of course, the old Joe Brown faction, Smith haters, also had much to do with putting Dorsey in the field.

It was a campaign the State and the nation will long remember, for its result was watched not only by those who considered the whole country in a crisis, but also by

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

those who wanted to see what Georgia would do with Tom Watson.

To further elicit the interest of a commonwealth noted for its love of political fights that are sure enough hot, former Senator Hardwick was running for Governor on an anti-League platform against Clifford M. Walker, pro-League.

Well, well, politics doth indeed make strange companions. Forth now go Watson and Hardwick, bitter enemies since 1910, to battle together to save the State from the League of Nations. And forth went a veritable army to defeat them. "The Two Toms"—they must be defeated at all cost, said preachers, all the daily newspapers but one, the American Legion and the Wilsonites. The two Toms were traitors, they said—"the State's star slackers." Failure to support Wilson caused the opprobrium they hurled. Hardwick had openly declared from every stump in Georgia in 1918 that President Wilson, who charged him with disloyalty, was a common liar. He had said so in Washington, virtually to the President's face, maintaining that his right to oppose America's entrance into the war was no affair of the President's. He did not fail to repeat the statement now, expanding it to include all and singular those who said he was a traitor. Every man who rose at a Hardwick meeting to heckle him had spoken no more than a sentence ere the fearless candidate shot out at him with great deliberation and distinctness: "You are a liar."

Watson and Hardwick toured a number of counties, when it was seen that the state of Watson's health would not permit his going further without rest. Asthma and acute bronchitis had him in their grip. Meeting after

DECREE OF DESTINY

meeting was cancelled. Riding rough roads in automobiles in all kinds of weather were bringing on a crisis. After several days of rest, however, he would resume the campaign. He took a physician with him. Though greeted by huge throngs at every stump, at no time during the race could he be heard distinctly more than twenty or thirty feet away.

One evening he was driven up to the hotel at Buford after a day of physical torture from bronchitis. He hoped to get some rest in order to be able to speak there the next day. Informing the landlady that he was ill, Mr. Watson had supper sent to his room. After eating he retired at once. He could not sleep—nervous, sick, under a terrible strain. He became more restless as he tried to sleep.

From downstairs in the office issued much hilarity as a card game progressed. There was laughter and loud talking. The ill candidate got up and stepped out on the balcony that overlooked the first floor. There the merry party of four was, around a table, enjoying the game. Mr. Watson knew he would never go to sleep with that "racket" going on. He commanded the four to "cut out that damned fuss down there so I can sleep."

Quite surprised at first, the poker players broke into derisive laughter when they spied a spectral figure glaring down over the railing. Spectral he looked, for Mr. Watson was in his underclothes. Yet laughter was not in order; that is to say, it would not be brooked. Seizing a huge "History of the United Daughters of the Confederacy," Mr. Watson hurled it straight at the poker game with all his might. It landed where he aimed it. The four jumped up and, accompanied by the landlady,

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

rushed up the stairs. A pitched battle between the dishabille candidate and the poker players now was staged, the landlady hurrying away for a policeman. Mr. Watson was almost stripped in the conflict before it became clear what it was all about. The policeman put him under arrest, declaring he must give bond or go to jail. Mr. Watson told him he'd rot in jail before he'd ever give any bond.

It suddenly dawned on the officer whom he had arrested, and he tried to persuade Mr. Watson to let him go and get somebody to go on his bond. The candidate for the Senate refused—he was now determined to go to jail; would sign no bond himself and would permit no one to sign one with him. To jail he went, and ran the risk of death from pneumonia, spending the remainder of the inclement night on a miserable cot on a stone floor.

Early the next morning two small boys appeared before the bars of a window.

"Mister Tom; is that you, Mister Tom," two boyish voices called. He told them he was still there.

"We just came to find out if you needed anything," they said, explaining that their father was also coming down.

Strange picture indeed. No, he did not need anything; he was all right, he said, though he did not believe then he would live to get home. He got up and went to the window.

"Whose boys are you?" he asked kindly.

They told him. They said they would wait until the jailor came to turn him out. This was not long, and as the Sage of Hickory Hill emerged he put his arms around the two boys and started toward town. On the way he

DECREE OF DESTINY

met Hardwick, who was scheduled to speak with Watson that day. He was enroute to the jail, having learned of his colleague's plight.

"These boys, Tom, have real human sympathy, a sympathy most refreshing—the first to come to me in jail. I mean to send them both away to some fine school."

He was as good as his word. The lads were guests at Hickory Hill, and were sent to school by its master.

The race wore on, bitter in its every aspect. After recuperating from the Buford incident (which, in fact, made sentiment more than ever in his favor, many interpreting it as a "put-up job on Watson") Mr. Watson again took the stump. And now was that mammoth gathering at the auditorium in Atlanta following announcement of his appearance in that city. He was to speak at 8 o'clock at night. At 5 o'clock in the afternoon the chief of the fire department had the doors of the huge hall closed, refusing further admittance. There were then 10,000 persons in the auditorium. They would wait three hours for Watson to appear. The seats filled, in the aisles, on the various floors, on the stage, they had packed the hall. The fire department head estimated that 10,000 would barely cover the multitude he had turned away. Never before or since have 20,000 persons sought entrance at any hall in Georgia to hear any man.

The Atlanta Georgian and *Sunday American*, in line with the Hearst policy, was opposed to the League of Nations. It was the only daily newspaper in Georgia which supported Watson and Hardwick.

On September 8, 1920 Thomas E. Watson defeated the Governor of his State and a United States Senator who was his old political enemy, combined, in the most signal

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

victory ever recorded in Georgia politics. He won by a majority of 104 convention votes, very nearly polling more popular votes than both his opponents. The popular vote was: Watson 103,542; Dorsey 68,965; Smith 55,927. Watson's victory in the big counties with largest convention votes was signal indeed, for these counties were those supposed to have been always anti-Watson. The convention vote was: Watson 245; Dorsey 103; Smith 38. With the majority of the convention votes, he was duly nominated at the following state convention at Macon.

Hardwick's vote for Governor was not so definite, one county in fact causing a run-over between him and Walker. Watson called on Georgians to "finish the job," and in the second race Hardwick won.

All opposition having been eliminated in the primary, the general election in November named Thomas E. Watson a Senator of the United States.

CHAPTER XLV

SENATOR

NEARLY three decades since the close of the Fifty-second Congress, Mr. Watson now returned to Washington a Senator in the Sixty-seventh. Calvin Coolidge, Vice-President, was just entering upon his duties as presiding officer over the Senate whose color, for greatness, was now more pronounced than when Mr. Watson was a Representative. There were William E. Borah, John Sharp Williams, Philander C. Knox, Robert M. LaFollette, Oscar W. Underwood, Frank D. Brandegee, Hiram W. Johnson, John K. Shields, Albert B. Cummins, Claude A. Swanson, and not a few others equally notable.

The Senator from Georgia, now covered with the scars of many a battle as well as with a most diversified distinction, first renewed his old acquaintance with the illustrious Senator from Massachusetts, Henry Cabot Lodge, who, as we have seen, was Mr. Watson's contemporary in the House. Whereas the Georgian now had been for nearly 30 years involved in many and varied public enterprises, Mr. Lodge had never once left the national legislature. He was now covered with a great and consistent distinction.

The Senators-elect were sworn in in fours, and Mr. Watson advanced to the Clerk's desk with James E. Watson, of Indiana; Ovington E. Weller, of Maryland; and

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

Frank B. Willis, of Ohio. His colleague from Georgia was Senator W. J. Harris.

It was the extraordinary or special session, called by the former President Wilson, that opened on March 4, 1921, to witness the inauguration of Warren G. Harding as President of the United States, and ended on the 15th of that month, when the first session of that Congress began.

Three Watson resolutions of a radical character got no further than the committees to which they were referred: that requesting the President to remove the five members of the Federal Reserve Board and appoint others who were not bankers, on the ground that they were controlled by Wall Street; that to refund to the States the special taxes on cotton collected by the Federal Government at the close of the Civil War; and that requesting the President to grant freedom to persons convicted of violation of the espionage laws during the World War. These were offered at the special session.

One aimed at Watson at the special session, by Senator Thomas J. Ryan, of New York, calling for the discontinuance of the use by the former of his rooms in the Senate office building as editorial offices of *The Columbia Sentinel*, and conveying expressions of disapproval to Watson and the President, was never reported out of the Committee on Judiciary.

The first Watson speech of note was at the opening of the first session and on the Colombian treaty. The pact provided for the payment to the Republic of Colombia of \$25,000,000 in settlement of its claim of having been damaged in certain lands and rights by the United States in the Panama Canal venture in 1903. The treaty was a

SENATOR

hang-over from the Wilson administration. In his quite lengthy address, Senator Watson said:

I am almost inclined to wonder whether Senators upon the other side of the aisle [Republicans] are residuary legatees of the political will of Woodrow Wilson. I thought they whipped him upon the idea that he was wrong. Have they no fear that they will whip themselves, by adopting Wilsonism at the very beginning of the session?

The voice of the minority went unheeded in 1918 and the cables were so closed that Europe never knew that the American people, to the extent that they obtained the opportunity, condemned the policies of Woodrow Wilson. Last year they did obtain a full opportunity, and had it not been for the most powerful pressure that could have been brought in some of the Southern States, notably in my own, those States would have gone for the Republican ticket in opposition to Wilsonism. Now the very first thing I encounter here is an effort of the Republican party to carry out Wilsonism in its strongest manifestation; and apparently they are not afraid of the by-election that may come this year, or the general congressional election that will come next year.

Much has been said about the fact—and I am willing to treat it for the purpose of argument as a fact—that we Americans encouraged the revolution in Panama. Why should we not have done so? We are hereditary revolutionists. We are so from instinct, history, and tradition. We are so by sentiment. Our monuments, our history, our poetry, our literature, are revolutionary. I do not look in the face of a single Senator who is not proud of the fact that he can allege that his ancestors were extremely revolutionary some years ago. I mean, of course, as far back as 1776.

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

He contended that ratification of the treaty would precipitate a question of the equal right of Colombia with the United States over the canal. He voted against it, but the Senate ratified the treaty on April 20th.

Senator Watson was assigned to service on the standing Committee on Civil Service and later to that on Claims. On July 7th he was heard in favor of making European nations in debt to the United States pay. If they were made to do so, a cash bonus could be paid at once to ex-service men, he held.

Senator Myers, of Montana, declared that the American Legion was opposed to a cash bonus, and that it was easy enough for sentiment in favor of such a measure, several of which had been introduced, to be worked up by unsound propaganda, a thing the Legion was trying to check.

Senator Watson interrupted the gentleman to inquire who made the American Legion the arbiter of free speech in this country, and "who authorized them to usurp to themselves the right to say who shall speak or who shall write?" He declared he was an honorary member of the Sailors' and Soldiers' Union.

Senator Myers said he knew of no instance where the Legion was so acting. Senator Watson said he knew of many. He had in mind the unremitting warfare the Legion had waged against him in Georgia. Senator Ashurst, of Arizona, said that Senator Myers was arguing in a circle—that he was calling the Legion a bulwark of American liberties and fighting a reward for its members at the same time.

In the debate on the tax revision bill, Senator Heflin, of Alabama, was defending the South against charges of bought elections. Senator Watson interrupted:

SENATOR

"Mr. President, I remind my friend again that the Senator from Connecticut said that elections down South were mere formalities; that it was a question of putting a nickel in the slot, and no matter what nickel it was the result was the same. The Senator from Alabama perhaps knows that the record here pending before the Senate shows that a certain Senator on the other side paid \$192,000 for his seat."

He was alluding to the Ford-Newberry controversy, in which he favored Newberry.

On October 17th, in the debate on the German treaty of general reparations, Senator Watson declared that the money could be collected if the custodians of seized German property in this country "were made to disgorge." He said the loser must pay, but this nation was not, under the genius of its government, the collector of debts due France, Great Britain or any other country; and further that American boys were not going across the Atlantic again to die for any foreign nation's claims. He expressed strong disapproval of the quartering of negro colonial troops of the French in the homes of the white people of Germany in the occupied areas. He inveighed against "the dictation of legislation by the President" in public statements, declaring the chief executive must confine himself to his veto.

When the bill to amend the prohibition law to tighten it came on for debate in August, Senator Watson declared that "the flagrant violation of the fundamental law by prohibition agents in searches and seizures should be stopped," and he opposed any kind of law allowing a search of person or property for liquor without a warrant issued by a lawful magistrate. He classed Coca-Cola as

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

“one of the most deleterious drinks known,” and advocated taxing it more.

In the debate that revolved around the Supreme Court, Senator Watson took the position that: “The Supreme Court has no authority to set aside an act of Congress, passed within its constitutional power by both Houses and approved by the President of the United States.” He cited the minutes of James Madison of the Constitutional Convention (first published, he said, in 1842) to support his contention that the above power was not conferred upon the Supreme Court by the Constitution because, in the convention which framed that instrument, the States had twice refused to delegate any such annulment power to any branch of the general government.

On the 21st of October, in the midst of general remarks upon the American army in the World War, Senator Watson said:

How many Senators know that a private soldier was frequently shot by his officers because of some complaint against officers' insolence; and that they had gallows upon which men were hanged, day after day, without court-martial or any other form of trial. How many Senators know that? I had and have the photograph of one of those gallows, upon which 21 white boys had already been executed at sunrise when the photograph was taken; and there were others waiting in the camp jails to be hanged morning after morning.

On November 1st, Senator James W. Wadsworth, Jr., of New York, read the above Watson remarks to the Senate and demanded that the Georgia Senator be made to prove them; for, if true, he said, the responsible officers should be hanged. Senator Watson, in a hot rejoinder,

SENATOR

said the Senator from New York was taking a great deal for granted; that "demand" didn't go in the Senate of the United States—"and the Senator should know that we are equals here and I defy him."

He went on to add that "the officers made courtesans of too many of the nurses—not all of them, but too many of them"; and he charged that American soldiers had been even ordered to break up long lines of motor equipment to protect profiteers, that food had been hidden or destroyed to benefit packers, and that distribution of supplies to the allies continued while many soldiers of this country were starving in the mud.

Senator Wadsworth declared Senator Watson should go before the Committee on Military Affairs and prove his charges—that the army deserved the probe to have its name cleared, if not guilty. The Georgia Senator refused to go before the Committee on Military Affairs, saying it would naturally whitewash the charges, but declared he could prove every one of them. Here someone handed him a photograph of a scaffold from which several soldiers were hanging. He called the Senate's attention to it, saying it was a copy of the one he had at home.

Senator Borah got the floor to say it was he who sent the picture to Senator Watson a moment before. The Idaho Senator said two ex-service men had talked to him in confidence, had told him of hangings of American soldiers at Gievres, France, and that the photograph was of four such soldiers swinging from a gallows at that place. Senator Borah declared the soldiers told him the men were executed without court-martial, but he said he was never able to verify their statements sufficiently to warrant his starting an official probe.

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

Senator Ashurst here interposed that the Committee on Military Affairs had voted to promote one officer proven guilty of cruelty to his men. Senator Lenroot, of Wisconsin, suggested a special committee of five Senators to probe the Watson charges. It was appointed as follows: Brandegee, Ernst, Willis, Overman and Pomerene. Senator Shields was later put on the committee in place of Pomerene.

The hearings before this committee, over a period of three months, ending in February, 1922, to which witnesses from nearly every section of the country were summoned, were too well covered by the newspapers to require review here. Suffice it to say the men who had detailed to Senator Watson many wild stories in conversations failed to appear to testify in some instances, and "went back on him" in their testimony in many others.

The New York Times editorially called on the committee to report, asking "what became of the Watson charges?" The committee took its time and it was more than a year after the hearing, March 1, 1923, that the committee, through Senator Brandegee, reported that "the charges were not sustained by the testimony."

When the second session opened in December 1921, Senator Watson spoke at length on the Attorney General Harry M. Daugherty investigation, scoring Daugherty, and T. B. Felder, his "accomplice," (the same Felder—dubbed "T. Bosh" by Watson—who had promised to skin Watson like an eel at the 1912 Underwood convention in Georgia) in the matter of securing a "fraudulent" pardon for Charles W. Morse, millionaire, from the Atlanta federal prison.

He demanded payment by European nations of their

SENATOR

debts to the United States, saying we had a right to force payment even with arms. He sought the removal of W. P. G. Harding, head of the Federal Reserve Board. Senator Watson spoke against ratification of the Four-Power treaty.

On February 14, 1922, in the debate on the bill for adjusted compensation for World War veterans of the United States, Senator Watson spoke, in part, as follows:

On yesterday the Senator from Idaho [Mr. Borah] addressing the Senate at length in opposition to the bonus bill, took the position that the disabled soldier alone was entitled to compensation at this time. . . .

Mr. President, I cannot endorse that line of reasoning. Are battles won by disabled soldiers? Those who are killed in battle die "the beautiful death of a soldier," but they do not win the battle. The disabled soldier, nobly risking his life and being put out of action, does not win the battle. . . . The Hindenburg line, and all other lines, are broken by men who are neither dead nor disabled. Two soldiers confront the enemy, equal in bravery, equal in the sense of service, take exactly the same risk. One is shot down. The other goes forward and wins the victory.

In what degree is the patriotism of the one less than that of the other? By what process of reasoning do you reach the conclusion that the man who fortunately escapes injury or death deserves less at the hands of his country than the man who is so unfortunate in taking the same risks as to be disabled or killed?

Mr. President, since the rejection of the plan offered by the Senator from North Carolina, I would raise the bonus in this way: I would put back into circulation the money that has been withdrawn from it, in round numbers \$2,000,000,000. That I would give to the soldiers, and give it now, \$50 apiece. Then next year let us take up

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

the subject again and deal with it in the light of the circumstances which then surround us. No man can tell what will be the condition of this country and this Government a year from now. The issuance of the \$2,000,000,000 would end unemployment, inspire enterprise and usher in an era of prosperity.

The second session wore on, its record notable for extended debate upon the manifold questions which were the aftermath of the World War. Senator Watson was heard on most of them. His health now in a precarious condition, he refused to listen to friends or physicians when they cautioned him to slow down. He would be in his seat; others might go on pleasure trips, but his people had called him back to duty and in the line of duty he would be found. The bane of the Senate, no quorum, would never be attributable to him.

Hotel life in Washington had been found much against him and Mrs. Watson, now in failing health also; and a home in Chevy Chase, Maryland, not far from the capital, was taken. Mrs. Lytle was with them, working for the Senator in a secretarial capacity.

And now was evidenced those spiritual workings which, in him, defied fatigue, disease, even the shadow of the grave. In the very throes of his physical enemy, asthma, he aroused his faculty of composition, as a wounded lion who would return to the fray, and calling up again the mighty theme so dear to his heart, he wrote his unpublished treatise, *The Last Campaign of Napoleon*. The spell of the Corsican who became the great Emperor of the French—it would live with him until his own life was gone. He turned to it yet once again, and the fascination was there as of yore: the dramatic last stand of the

SENATOR

inexplicable figure he called the greatest man the world ever saw. And once again he wrote it, revealing still his wondrous grasp of its events and his power to portray them. Not only this but he also gave time to the making of a complete revision of his Jackson biography.

In September 1922 the humidity of the climate began showing marked effects upon him, making worse the chronic asthma. Mrs. Watson had returned to Hickory Hill several months before. She expected her husband home at the end of the current session. On Sunday, the 17th, he woke in great struggle for breath. An Ohio remedy President Harding had given the Georgia Senator was used and he experienced relief. Nurses were in constant attendance.

On the 22nd the second session of the Congress would adjourn. He must be there. The order of his personal physician of a week in bed would not be complied with. He had already been away several days. Friday was the last day—he must go. Mrs. Lytle urged him not to go.

“No; I must go and say good-bye to the boys,” he said.

She reminded him of the expected November session when he could be back. She did not understand what he meant. Not good-bye to the session did he mean—but good-bye forever. Yes, it was in his look, his voice. It would be his last words in the august assembly whose traditions he loved so well.

He went and remained throughout the day. He had some few remarks to make; he patiently waited for recognition. They were, as of a right they should have been in the order of nature, in behalf of the under-dog, the oppressed. They were words in behalf of the coke miners of Pennsylvania evicted from their homes during a strike;

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

and they were the very last words that were uttered by any member on the floor of the Senate in the second session of the Sixty-seventh Congress.

He returned home exhausted, but gathering strength in the evening, gave Mrs. Lytle a résumé of the accomplishments of the entire second session, revealing still a command of that memory which was one of his great gifts. Saturday he was at his office. Upon waking Sunday morning, he was in a cheerful mood and sang to himself as he shaved. In the evening he ate a hearty meal and talked with his old-time clearness and interest. He retired at 8:30 o'clock on suggestion of his nurse. Near midnight a spell of violent coughing seized him. ministrations resulted in rest for the remainder of the night.

Senator Watson did not rise Monday. He had arranged to leave for home in Georgia on the afternoon of the next day. As the day advanced, growing warmer, the asthma became worse. He told Mrs. Lytle that if he was to suffer another night like the last, he would rather go out. Drugs were administered to save him this. Near midnight the nurse announced that the Senator was very low. The physician was hurriedly recalled. It was seen that no hope could be held out for him.

As though it were a fate that would not be denied its fruition, almost in the very article of death, the spirit of the inner man—the real Watson—surged forward, as he raised himself up, looked around him, and said:

“I am not afraid—I am not afraid to die.”

He fell back; the panoply of the inevitable end spread over him; and at 2:15 o'clock on the morning of September 26, 1922, Thomas E. Watson left “the arena of these endless contests.”

SENATOR

It was respiratory paralysis, the physicians said, coming as the last stage of chronic asthma.

The funeral—well, the Georgia newspapers printed more about it than any other funeral of which they ever made mention; and it was reported in detail in the press of the nation. There were 10,000 persons to add to the little town of Thomson's some 3,000, so they say, on September 28th. That crowd will be the last thing the people of that town ever forget.

The Congressional escort, as named by Vice-President Coolidge and Speaker Gillett, were: Senators Fletcher of Florida, Heflin of Alabama, Dial of South Carolina, and Harrison of Mississippi; and Representatives Parker, Larson, Crisp, Langford, Bell and Vinson of Georgia, Sisson of Mississippi, and Martin of Louisiana.

It was due to Mrs. Lytle that the funeral train did not move out of Washington with the dead Senator in a baggage car, in accordance with governmental regulation where no special arrangements are made. She had the casket laid across two seats in an extra Pullman she ordered. The casket had to be taken from the car through windows.

Back to Hickory Hill. Here the wife, broken in health and now walking in "the grey gloom of old age," herself to join the illustrious dead less than a year later (May 14, 1923), who had expected him this very day—but living. Friends wanted the great Georgian to lie in state in the capitol in Atlanta, but she had said it would have been his wish to come on home; but in Hickory Hill he lay in state indeed as thousands filed past the bier. Mrs. Watson sat in her gloom, knowing full well she would join him soon.

Ah, those years of joys and sorrows—the years in which,

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

as he gave himself to his fellow men, he was giving of her too—the sacrifice for the working out of the destiny of the man she loved, of whom nature, having bestowed much upon him, demanded much. She remembered all his gracious ways, his courtly ways; how, when she was absent from the dining table as guests were being seated, he had always pointed to “the chair reserved for Miss Georgia—in which he would permit no one to sit but Miss Georgia.” Those days were gone into the long past—to be recalled some day, perhaps, when they should be together again.

What was his greatest ambition? He wrote it in a letter to him who has now finished the tracery of his life:

“My dream has always been a political union between the agricultural West and South, to combat the innate and indomitable federalism of the North and East, where financial, commercial and manufacturing interests will always secure special privilege from whatever party is in power.”

His religion? He told what it was. Calling up the Greek of ancient Athens who longed only to be “deathless in the divinity of inspired purpose and work,” he drew from him the soliloquy:

“Immortal? Yea, I am immortal. I shall live, not one idle, blissful, unfruitful life in the eternity of the shades; but I shall live lustily, joyously, fruitfully, usefully, sublimely in all the years that are to come to this earth—side by side with scholars as their shining faces tend upward to the higher summits of Thought, soul to soul with patriot statesmen who give their days and nights to the noble problems of just laws, healthy conditions, happy homes!”

Verdict engraved upon stone? Let it be done then as he would have it done—in all the force of the solemn

SENATOR

truth. His own epitaph he designated. Have men the courage to go there and carve it? True and altogether fitting, borrowed from the pupil of a celebrated Italian patriot of the 19th century——

“Here lies the enemy of the Bourbons, the Jesuits and the Inasmuches.”

Against tyranny of rulers, oppression by priests, and those who offer affected excuses for knuckling to both, he hurled his mighty wrath, emboldened in the consciousness of its own eternal justice; insomuch that I rank him, in the order of time,——

Luther—Voltaire—Settembrini—Watson.

THE END

INDEX

- Aldrich, Nelson W., 231.
 Allen, W. V., 268.
 Alliance, Farmers', 200; Ocala Platform, 213.
 American Legion, 382, 390.
 American Rural Free Delivery, 252-260.
 Anderson, Clifford, 170.
 Arnold, Reuben R., 290, 344.
 Atkinson, Wm. Y., 262, 263, 265.

 Barker, Wharton, 291.
 Barnes, George T., 203.
 Barnes, Jno. M., 309-311.
 Barr, Robt., 301.
 Barrow, Pope, 170, 171.
 Bartlett, Chas. L., 166.
 Bealer, Alex. W., 208.
 Beck, Judge Marcus, 290.
 Bell, Representative, 399.
Bethany, 291.
 Black, J. C. C., 154, 170, 247-251, 261, 262, 264, 265.
 Blackburn, B. M., 270.
 Blaine, Jas. G., 197.
 Blount, Jas. H., 231.
 Bonus Bill, 395-396.
 Borah, Wm. E., 393.
 Boynton, Jas. S., 168, 179.
 Brandegee, F. D., 393.
 Breckinridge, W. C. P., 231.
 Bridges, S. R., 290.
 Brisbane, Arthur, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 346.
 Brown, Jos. E., 131, 142.
 Brown, J. J., 320, 336.
 Brown, Jos. M., 316, 321, 335, 351.
 Brown, Pope, 304.
 Bryan, Wm. J., 231, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 294, 317, 351, 372.
 Bugg, Aunt Mandy, 7.

 Burkitt, Frank, 270.
 Burns, Wm. J., 338, 340.
 Butler, M. C., 228.

 Candler, Bishop Wl. A., 353.
 Carroll, Phil, 215, 216, 217.
 Cartledge, Jno. L., 375.
 Caruso, 354.
 Casey, Judge J. H., 140, 143, 150.
 Catholicism, fight on, 325-337.
 Christian, Elam, 229.
 Clarke, Marshall J., 176.
 Clay, A. S., 310, 349.
 Cleveland, Grover, 247, 266, 292, 293.
 Cobb, Jas. E., 243, 244.
 Cobb, T. R. R., 270.
 Cody, Jas. M. W., 204-212.
 Colquitt, Alfred H., 142, 170, 231.
 Columbia County, 11.
Columbia Sentinel, 368, 388.
 Columbus, Christopher, 354.
 Coolidge, Calvin, 387, 399.
 Cortelyou, Geo. B., 358, 359.
 Cooper Union speech, 292.
 Crisp, Chas. F., 231, 399.
 Cummins, Albert B., 387.

Daily Press, 262.
 Darrow, Clarence, 294.
 Daugherty, H. M., 394.
 Democratic National Convention (1896), 266.
 Dial, Senator, 399.
 Dorsey, Hugh M., 346, 381.
 Dreiser, Theodore, 301.
 Dunning, N. A., 358, 359.
 Durham, Dr. Geo. W., 104, 110, 112, 114, 133, 179, 265.
 Durham, Mrs. Geo. W., 104, 133, 265.
 Durham, Georgia, 104, 105; early his-

INDEX

- tory, 106-113; engaged to T. E. W., 121; marries T. E. W., 133, 179.
- Edwards, Chas. G., 353.
- Ellington, Rev. J. W., 104, 133.
- Evans, C. A., 262.
- Everett, Wm., 231.
- Farmers' Alliance, 200, 224; Ocala Platform, 213.
- Farrar, Geraldine, 354.
- Felder, Thos. B., 350, 394.
- Felton, Rebecca Latimer, 335.
- Field, Jas. G., 247.
- Fleming, Wm. M., 257, 334.
- Fletcher, Senator, 399.
- Fort Lauderdale, Fla., estate, 306.
- Foster, Judge, 334.
- Frank, Leo, case, 338-345.
- Frauds in 1892 election, 249; in 1894 election, 264.
- Free Silver, 233-235, 266.
- Garrard, Louis F., 178.
- Gary, W. T., 171, 172.
- Gibson, Judge Wm. M., 87, 132, 134, 135, 152, 154.
- Gillett, Speaker, 399.
- Gilmore, Inez Haynes, 301.
- Glover incident, 314-315.
- Gordon, Jno. B., 125, 142, 163, 206, 231.
- Gorman, Arthur P., 231.
- Gorkey, Maxim, 301.
- Grady, Henry W., 163; banquet, 171-173.
- Graves, John Temple, 196, 197; tribute to Watson, 270-271.
- Griffith, Frank P., 177.
- Hale, Eugene, 231.
- Hammond, Wm. R., 176.
- Hanson, Miss Belle, 20, 47.
- Hapgood, Norman, 302.
- Harben, Will N., 301, 303.
- Harding, Warren G., 388, 397.
- Harding, Wl. P. G., 395.
- Hardwick, Thos. W., 253, 304, 306, 307, 310, 322, 323, 324, 379, 382, 386.
- Harris, Nat. E., 166, 174, 346.
- Harris, W. J., 379, 388.
- Harrison, Benjamin, 196, 197, 230, 247, 266.
- Harrison, Senator, 399.
- Hearst, W. R., 292, 293, 294, 296, 297, 303.
- Heflin, Senator, 399.
- Hickory Hill, 306, 316, 319, 321, 362, 372, 374, 385, 399.
- Hill, Benjamin H., 124, 161, 163, 170, 180, 184-185.
- Hill, Benjamin H., Jr., 170.
- Hill, Chas. D., 289, 290.
- Hill, David B., 292.
- Hillyer, Judge Geo., 175, 176.
- Hines, Jas. K., 262, 263, 264, 267, 272, 307, 312, 313, 315.
- Hoar, Geo. F., 231.
- Hobe Sound, Fla., estate, 365.
- Hook, E. B., 208.
- Howard, Wm. M., 204.
- Howell, Captain, 227.
- Howell, Clark, 304.
- Hubbard, Elbert, 346, 373.
- Hutchins, Rufe, 350.
- Irwin, F. A., 177.
- Irwin, Wallace, 301.
- Jackson*, 301, 303.
- Jackson*, Jas., 170.
- Jefferson*, 291, 329.
- Jeffersonian*, 302, 319.
- Jeffersonian Pub. Co.*, 320.
- Johnson, Herschel V., 123, 124, 125, 180, 262.
- Johnson, Hiram W., 387.
- Johnson, Preston B., 132, 133, 134, 153, 159.
- Jones, Jas. K., 268.
- Jones, Jas. S., 159, 160.
- Jones, Rev. M. Ashby, 353.
- Kimball House, 160, 183, 249, 349, 351.
- Knox, Philander C., 387.

INDEX

- La Follette, Robt. M., 387.
 Lamar, L. Q. C., 163.
 Lambdin, Judge W. W., 335.
 Langford, Representative, 399.
 Larsen, Representative, 399.
Last Campaign of Napoleon, 396, 397.
 Lawson, Thos. G., 231.
 League of Nations, 379, 380, 381, 382.
 Lee, Georgia Watson, 321, 362, 366.
 Lee, O. S., 306.
 Lester, Rufus E., 143, 231.
 Lewis, Hal, 204, 207.
 Livingston, L. F., 231, 253, 353.
 Local Option, 176, 178.
 Lodge, Henry Cabot, 231, 387.
 Loyless, Thos. W., 343.
 Lumpkin, Judge Samuel, 204, 212.
 Luther, 277, 401.
 Lytle, Alice Louise, 319, 320, 331,
 359, 360, 365, 366, 370, 371, 396,
 397, 398.
 Maddox, Ann Eliza (Watson, mother
 of T. E. W.), 11.
 Madison, Jas., 392.
 Mann, W. D., 300.
 Markham, Edwin, 301.
 Martin, Representative, 399.
 Masters, Edgar Lee, 301.
 McCarren, Patrick, 292.
 McDaniel, Henry D., 180, 335.
 McDuffie County, 11.
 McGregor, Chas. E., 126, 166, 179,
 203; trial, 204-212, 230, 296, 297,
 350.
 McKinley, Wm., 260.
 McLaws, Judge W. R., 86, 87, 99.
 McLendon, S. Guyton, 315, 334, 335.
 McPherson, Edward, 231.
 Meldrim, Peter W., 167.
 Morse, Chas. W., 394.
 Morton, Levi P., 196, 231.
 Moses, Chas. L., 231.
 "Mr. Speaker, where was I at?" 236-
 245.
 Napoleon (Bonaparte), 282, 286, 288,
 326, 329.
Napoleon, 288, 289, 329.
 National Farmers' Alliance, 200;
 Ocala Platform, 213.
 Northen, W. J., 251.
 Norton, S. F., 270.
 Norwood, Thos. M., 148.
 Nye, W. Gordon, 301, 302.
 Ocala Platform, 213.
 Ohl, Joe, 208.
 Olive, Samuel L., 334, 335.
 Overstreet, E. K., 279.
 Palmer, A. Mitchell, 379, 380.
 Parker, Alton B., 292.
 Parker, Representative, 399.
 Payne, Sereno E., 231.
 Pearce, Lulu M., 230, 248.
 Pearce, Robt. H., 20, 94, 95, 132, 335.
 Peek, W. L., 247.
 Pendleton, C. R., 166, 172, 179, 310,
 352.
 People's Party, 247, 276, 291.
People's Party Paper, 229-230, 303.
 Phagan, Mary, 338.
 Pierce, Bishop Geo. F., 131.
 Pierce, Geo. F., 148, 150.
 Pinkerton Detective Agency, 232-233.
 Platt, Orville H., 231.
 Populist National Convention (1896),
 267.
 Post, C. C., 229.
 Pringle, C. R., 177.
Progressive Democrat, 360.
 "Prose Miscellanies," 364.
 Randall, Jas. R., 135.
 Rankin, M. C., 271.
 Reed, H. W., 271.
 Reed, Jas. A., 379.
 Rice, F. P., 185.
 Rodgers, R. L., 176.
 Roney, H. C., 137, 139, 150, 155, 168,
 169.
 Roosevelt, Theodore, 292, 293, 294, 309,
 310, 346, 354, 365.
 "Rose on the Snow," 362-363.
 Rosser, Luther Z., 290, 344.
 Rountree, Dan W., 183.
 Rural Free Delivery, 252-260.

INDEX

- Russell, Richard B., 166, 172, 179, 184.
 Ryder, Rev. C. J., 245.
- Sailors' and Soldiers' Union, 390.
 Sanford, Governor, of Ala., 289.
 Seely, F. L., hoax, 354-357.
 Settembrini, 401.
 Sewall, Arthur, 267, 268, 272.
 Shields, E. A., 156, 157, 158.
 Shields, Jno. A., 387.
 Sisson, Representative, 399.
 "Sketches," 364.
 Slaton, Jno. M., 341, 343, 346, 351.
 Smith, Carlton, 24.
 Smith, Hoke, 304, 306, 307, 308, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 321, 323, 324, 346, 347, 348, 349, 354, 355, 356, 357, 374, 379, 380, 381.
 Snead, Judge Claiborne, 134, 135, 154, 156, 168, 169.
 "Socialists and Socialism," 364.
 Soldiers, hanging charges, 392-394.
 State Convention (1880), 143-148.
 Steed, Epenetus Alexis, 20, 49, 50, 51, 52, 58, 59, 71.
 Steed, Thos. J., 20.
 Stephens, Alex. H., 82; at Liberty Hall, 123-128; referred to by Toombs, 130, 163; at Kimball House, 160, 161, 164, 165; elected Governor, 167, 170; death, 179; memorial, 181, 246.
Story of France, 282-288, 329.
 Story, Theodosia Ernest, 21, 83, 91, 115.
 Swanson, Claude A., 387.
- Taft, Wm. Howard, 167, 317-318.
 Tibbles, Thos. H., 291.
 Terrell, Jos. M., 313.
 Thompson, Glenn, 82, 83.
 Thompson, Laura, 82, 83, 91.
 Thurman, Allen G., 196.
Tom Watson's Magazine, 300.
 Toombs, Robert, 124, 125, 128, 129; refers to Stephens, 130, 163; rebukes Watson, 131; refers to Jos. E. Brown, 131; at the Kimball House, 161-165; comment on Legislature, 185.
 Turner, Henry G., 231.
 Tutt, W. D., 100, 129, 137-138, 140; clashes with Watson, 150-155, 160, 165, 168, 187, 189.
 Twiggs, H. D. D., 135, 137-139, 150; in McGregor trial, 205-212; challenges Watson to duel, 221-223, 279, 280, 334, 351.
- Underwood, Oscar W., 349, 387.
- Verdery, Marion, 223.
 Vinson, Carl, 367, 368, 399.
 Voltaire, 354, 401.
- Walsh, Patrick, 143, 144.
 Washburn, Geo. F., 271.
 Washington, Booker, 353-354.
Waterloo, 303.
 Watson, Addie, 12.
 Watson, Agnes Pearce, 175, 230, 306, 364.
 Watson, Ann Eliza Maddox (mother of T. E. W.), 11, 79, 86, 346.
 Watson, Catherine, 11.
 Watson, Durham, 159, 230, 306, 320-321, 360, 366.
 Watson, Georgia Doremus, 321.
 Watson, Jas. E., 387.
 Watson, J. F., 13.
 Watson, Jno. Smith (father of T. E. W.), 11, 265.
 Watson, Julia, 13.
 Watson, Julian C., 12.
 Watson, Louise, 201, 363.
 Watson, Mary Isabella, 12.
 Watson, Mrs. Georgia, 201, 362-363, 365, 366, 371, 372, 396, 397, 399, 400.
 Watson, Thomas Edward (Edward Thomas), born, 11; begins school, 18; love of nature, 21; Theodosia, 21; decides to change order of name, 21; petulance and pranks, 25-28; early scrapbook: notes, poetry, reading, 30-44; enters col-

INDEX

lege, 49; debates, 53-57; escapes meningitis, 58-61; fights and pranks, 62-66; teaches first school, 69; debates, 74, 75; Mercerian Republic, 75, 76; sacrifices of mother and sister, 79; "to the god of storms," 80-81; teaches second school, 83; engaged to Laura Thompson, 83; inveighs against saloon, 84; enters Judge McLaws' office, 87; teaches third school, 87; second temperance speech, 87; admitted to bar, 87; teaches fourth school, 88; love lyrics, 89-94; break with Laura, 91; reconciled with Theo., 91; changes order of name, 95; begins practice in Thomson, 95; Napoleonic verse, 96-98; first jury case, 99; buys back old home place, 101-102; meets Georgia Durham, 104-105; final break with Theodosia, 114-115; wins Georgia's hand, 121; third temperance speech, 124; at Liberty Hall, 125-128; marries Georgia Durham, 133; attends Snead banquet, 134-135; Dennis Holden case, 136-137; Aiken Stanford case, 137-139; Teresa Barksdale case, 139-140; political birth in 1880 convention, 144; indicted and fined, 151-152; clash with Tutt, 153; indicted and case "settled," 153-154; elected to Legislature, 165; fiddles at Grady's, 172-173; eulogy of Stephens, 181-183; at Stephens' bedside, 183-184; Jack Peavy case, 186; Elvira Ivey case, 187-189; Mercer literary address, 190-195; as-sails jute bagging trust, 198-199; enters race for Congress, 200; grief for Louise, 202-203; McGregor case, 204-212; challenged by Twiggs to duel, 221-223; elected to Congress, 223; launches *People's Party Paper*, 229-230; enters Congress, 230; nominated for Speaker, 231; bill to probe Pinkertons, 232-233; "Mr. Speaker, where was I at?" 236-245; second race for Congress, de-

feat, 247-249; bills for relief of farmers, 252; rural free delivery measure, 252-260; *Daily Press*, 262; third race for Congress, defeat, 262-265; nominated by People's Party for Vice-President, 269; campaigns for Bryan-Watson ticket, 271-272; Zeigler case, 279; *Story of France*, 282-288; *Napoleon*, 288; Lucius Adkins case, 289-290; Douglas Cooper case, 289-290; lecture platform, 290; *Jefferson*, 291; *Bethany*, 291; nominated by Peoples' Party for President, 291; Cooper Union speech, 292; Hearst offer, 299-300; *Tom Watson's Magazine* 300; *Jeffersonian*, 302; *Watson's Jeffersonian Magazine*, 302; *Jackson*, 301, 303; *Waterloo*, 303; dis-franchisement speech, 305; clash with Barnes, 309-311; elects Smith Governor, 311-312; Glover incident, 314-315; second nomination for President, 317; *Jeffersonian Pub. Co.*, 320; anti-Catholic fight, 325-337; acquitted in federal court, 336; Leo Frank case, 338-345; Seely hoax, 354-357; *Progressive Democrat*, 360; circular saw incident, 361; *Columbia Sentinel*, 368; Buford incident, 383-385; elected U. S. Senator, 385-386; hanging of soldiers speech, 392-394; bonus bill speech, 395-396; *Last Campaign of Napoleon*, 396-397; death, 398; funeral, 399.

Watson, Tom Peter, 11.

Watson, William, 11.

Watson, William A., 12.

Watson's Jeffersonian Magazine, 302, 319.

Watson's Magazine, 339.

Weller, O. V., 387.

Wheeler, Gen. Joe, 236, 237, 238, 239.

Whitehead, Jas., 150, 189, 205, 290.

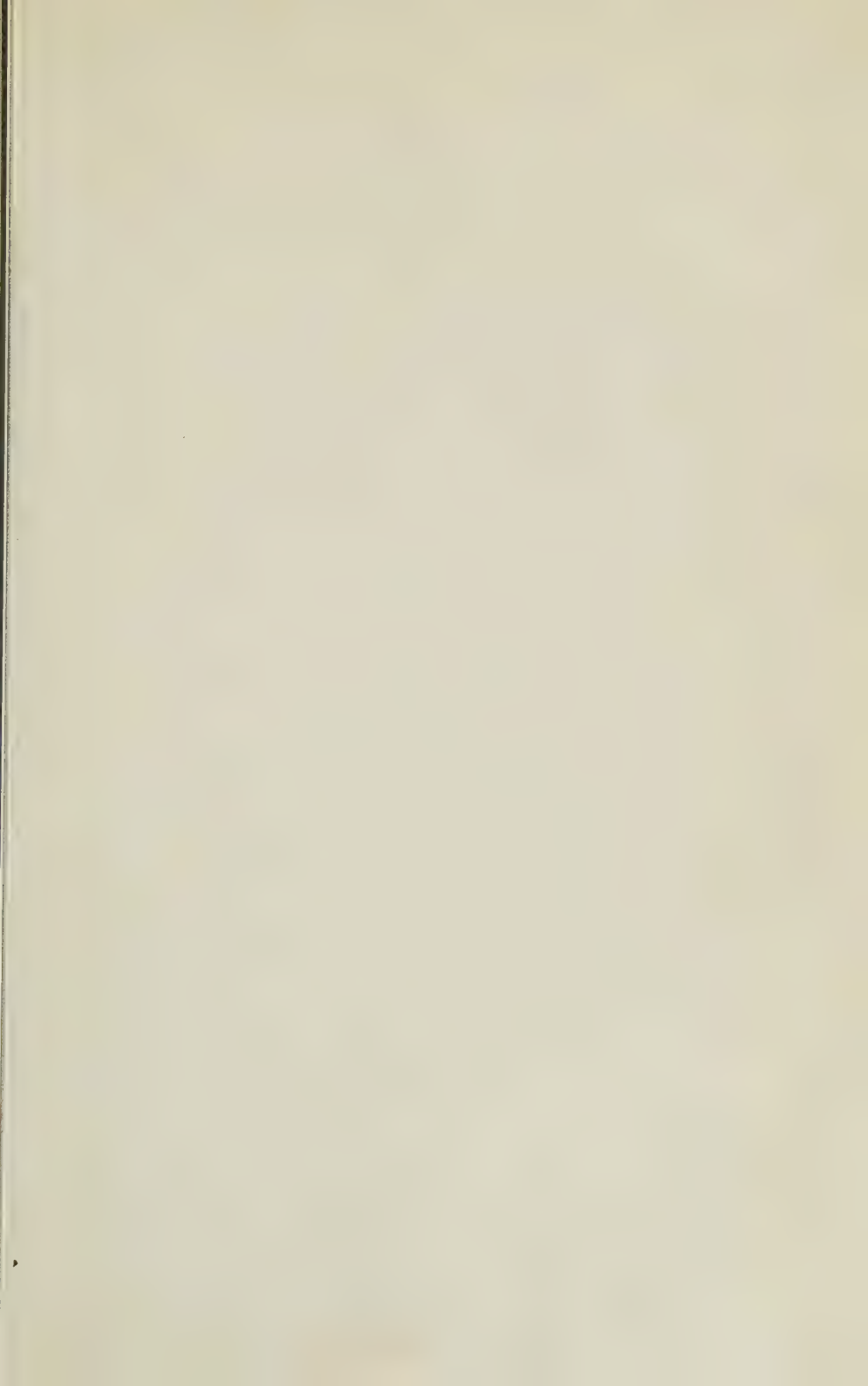
Wicker, Judge N. A., 186.

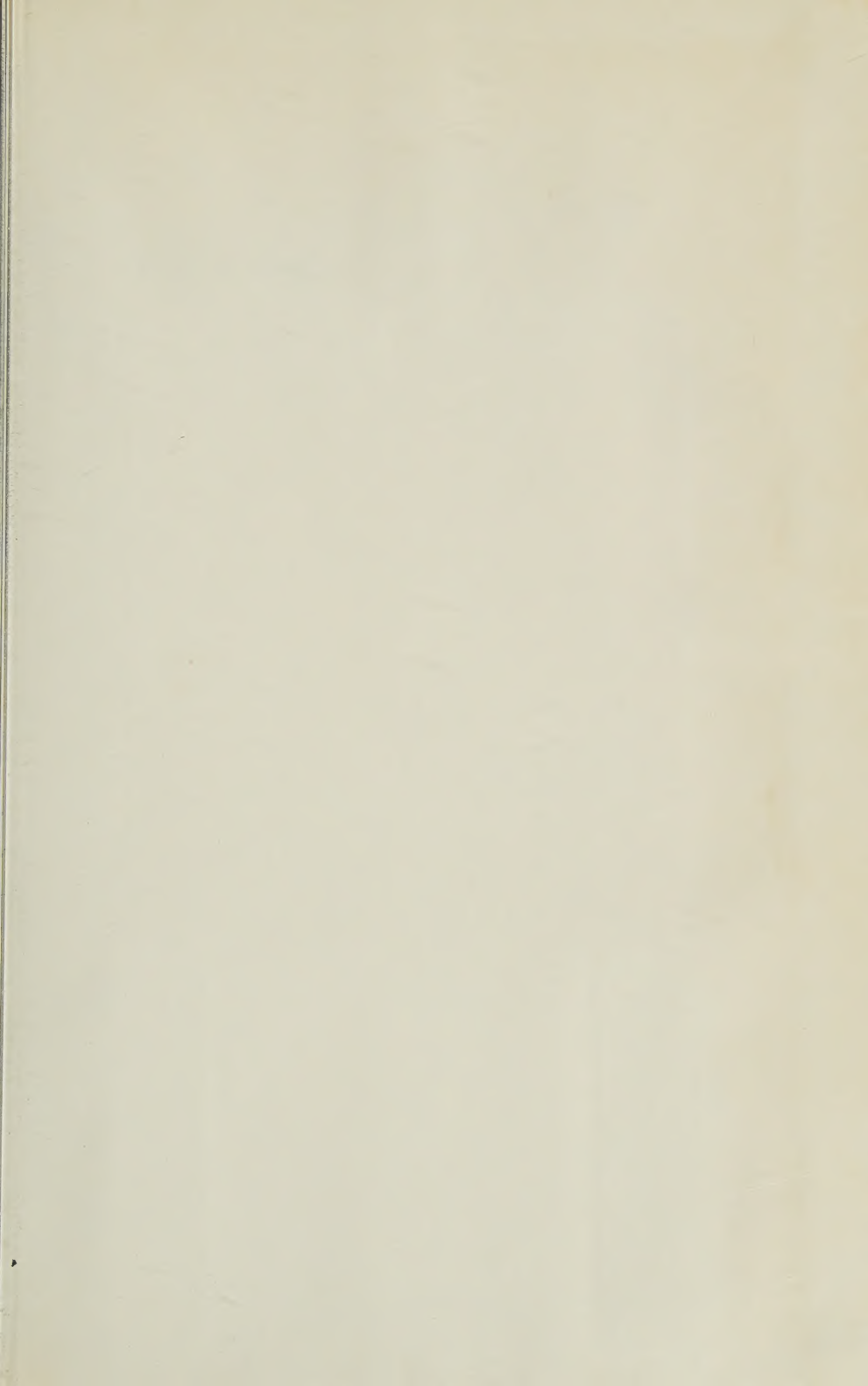
Wilcox, Ella Wheeler, 301.

Williams, Jno. S., 387.

INDEX

- Williams, "Toney," 223.
Wilson, Woodrow, 176, 349, 352, 364,
365, 379, 382, 388, 389.
Winn, Thos. E., 231.
Wright, Boykin, 135, 150, 151, 153,
154.
Wright, Seaborn, 166, 272.
Wrightsboro, 13, 136, 159.





RO1168 48945

115968

S ^BW33b

115968

S ^BW33b

Brewton

LIFE OF THOMAS E. WATSON

40

HOUSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

HOUSTON
TEXAS

This book may be kept for
FOURTEEN DAYS. With
due notice, it may be re-
newed once for the same
period. Fine for overtime
is two cents a day.

R01168 48945

